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THE WAR ON TWO FRONTS

Is Britain doing everything within her power to make this a war on two fronts? The opportunity is here now and it will never recur. It has been well said that with Russia's resistance in the East and America's occupation of Iceland in the West, victory for the first time ceases to be a faith and becomes a reasonable possibility.

Mr. Roosevelt's decision to take over the defence of Iceland is a step of immense importance. It means, as Mr. Churchill made clear, that the United States Navy will convoy ships as far as Iceland; it means, too, that America, for reasons of self-defence, is assuming responsibilities in the Eastern Hemisphere. It brings America appreciably nearer the war, and may make it difficult for Hitler to avoid turning America into an active belligerent. Mr. Roosevelt's action, combined with the R.A.F. sweeps over the North of France (which are primarily intended to destroy the air and sea bases from which German attack on British shipping is directed), gives a reasonable hope of victory in the Battle of the Atlantic.

The arrival of the Russian Military Mission, headed by an officer of significantly high rank, is encouraging. It offers hope of close collaboration between the General Staffs in Moscow and London. But that depends on whether British officialdom, military and diplomatic, has rid its mind of two fatal obsessions—that "Red armies" are necessarily inferior and that contact with Bolshevism should be as exiguous as possible.

In view of the universal ignorance of everything in Russia, it was reasonable to discourage excessive optimism about Soviet power. But the pessimism of the War Office was never wholly objective. It is still impossible to make any judgment of Russia's chances. Russian armies have had to yield ground and may have lost more heavily than the Moscow communiqués admit in prisoners, material and aircraft; but except in the direction of Smolensk, on a comparatively narrow front, no serious breach in the main Russian defensive positions has been made. Above all, the Russian forces have retained their cohesion, their power to deliver successful local counter-attacks, and their ability to maintain effective defence in the air. This is a tremendous achievement which calls for a corresponding effort on our side. We must act in the closest concert with the Russian Command and incur great risks in drawing off German forces from the East to the West. Of the attitude of the War Cabinet there is no doubt, but we cannot help recalling Whitehall's instinctive feeling that armies should be commanded by school-tie officers, and noticing in some quarters the notion that we must not put too much money on a likely "loser." We cannot altogether forget the glee with which the Foreign Office seized on the Russian-German pact of non-aggression in 1939 as evidence that Stalin and Hitler were birds of identical black feather, and we note the way in which the War Office tried to damp down the reception of the Russian generals here. We fear the state of mind which is willing enough to face the defeat of a Workers' Republic provided that a large number of Germans are killed in the process. We say with emphasis that the country has responded with virtual unanimity to Mr. Churchill's lead; that the Cabinet and the administration, as a whole, are fully alive to the importance of full co-operation with the U.S.S.R. We add that the U.S.S.R. should be invited to join in the Allied declaration of solidarity. We should now fear opposition to a treaty with Russia rather from Official Labour than from Conservatism. Ideologies should play no part in this question.

Russia's terrific struggle against the invader, and the fact that Britain has had a period of comparative immunity from air raids while the R.A.F. inflicts terrible damage on German towns, is breeding at the moment a most dangerous complacency. We have even heard it argued by economists that since Russia's oil and wheat surplus does not amount to a large quantity annually, German occupation would not add appreciably to what Russia was in any case supplying to Hitler's war machine. It is true that the scorched earth policy and the possible sabotage of Russian oil wells might make a German victory sterile for the year 1941. But imports and exports have nothing to do with the subject, and it is doubtful how far sabotage can go if the Russian armies are swiftly driven back. If Hitler conquers, he will not mind the starvation of millions of Slav peasants. He would take over the whole of Russian production and use the bulk of it for his

own purposes. If, on the other hand, Russia's defence remains unbroken, we cannot hope that Russia would succeed in defeating Germany without the aid of very active distractions on the Western front. It is not for the layman to discuss the type of the expedition which is possible. But if the invasion of the Continent is ever to be possible, to-day, when Germany's best fighters and bombers are fully engaged in the East, would seem to be the supremely suitable moment. If Germany achieves either a full victory or a position of sufficient stability to move back the bulk of the *Luftwaffe* into Western Europe, Britain must expect a more serious aerial invasion than anything that she has yet known; and though with American help Britain may hope to survive, the prospect of victory, if Russia is knocked out of the war, would be remote indeed. But given the help of American material for Britain and Russia, given the fullest staff collaboration between the countries, and propaganda designed to encourage the Fifth Column which ultimately menaces the Nazis everywhere in Europe, the war can be turned into a struggle of liberation and it can be fought effectively on two fronts. There is then at least a possibility of securing, if not a quick finish, at least such a weakening of Germany that a victory in 1942 becomes a possibility.

The Near East

The news that General Dentz is asking for an armistice in Syria comes as an immense relief. The occupation of Syria should have been undertaken months earlier, instead of leaving it to be fought under the blistering glare of the Arabian summer, through positions which the Vichy forces had plenty of time to prepare. The endurance of our forces has suffered a grilling test. It was, however, essential to take Syria. The two parallel mountain chains of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon render the country highly defensible, but eastward lies the desert, flat as a board, made of soil, not sand, traversable everywhere by tank and car to the Euphrates and Iraq. Iraq itself has been transferred from the Cairo to the Indian command, now taken over by General Wavell. This re-establishes the position of the last war, when Iraq was invaded from India. General Wavell's charge is, however, heavier now; Iran and India themselves may be threatened with invasion. As to the reconstitution of the Cairo command, Mr. Churchill was unwisely brusque to Mr. Hore-Belisha in refusing to give the House of Commons any information about Captain Oliver Lyttelton's mission to the Near East. General Wavell as sole commander was intolerably overburdened with a complex of military, political and publicity problems. General Auchinleck in command of the forces, General Haining of supply, are both to report to the War Cabinet through Mr. Lyttelton. The political complication of the Near East, with Syria, Vichy and the Free French, Palestine and the Arabs and Jews, Egypt and Libya, of the co-ordination of military and civil authority, of all the various authorities in the new territories in East Africa, produces difficulties which cannot all be referred to the Cabinet at home and which certainly ought not to be left solely to the military command. Taught by bitter experience, the Government will surely not involve themselves in mutually contradictory pledges such as were made in the last war to both Jews and Arabs.

The Home Front (*by an Industrial Correspondent*)

Sir Francis Joseph, the North Staffordshire colliery magnate, and Lord Woolton have been corresponding about food conditions in the mining villages. They seem to be in full agreement that the miners are not getting a square deal in the matter of food. A very large proportion of munition workers can by this time buy rationed food over and above their ration-book allowances, at the factory canteens; but very few coal mines have any provision at all for the supply of food, and the miner has only the extra cheese allowed him some months ago to set against this advantage of the munition workers. Sir Francis Joseph pleads for an additional supply of food for the miners; Lord Woolton retorts that he has made his arrangements after full consultation with the T.U.C. General Council, and that he is entirely willing to release additional supplies of food as soon as the coal industry makes proper arrangements for retailing it to the miners through pithead canteens, or some equivalent form of organisation. It is thus agreed that the miners' grievance is real; and it is also of the greatest importance, because inadequate food is bound to react on the miner's staying power, and to show its effects in either irregular work or lowered output. But it is not enough for Lord Woolton simply to call upon the colliery owners to produce a scheme. When Mr. Bevin, as Minister of Labour, had to face a similar problem last year in the munition factories, he solved it by making the provision of canteens compulsory in all establishments over a certain size. Why cannot the President of the Board of Trade, or whoever is the appropriate Minister, make a similar order applicable to the coal mines? The difficulty of small pits, like that of small munition works, will remain. But a compulsory order would ensure proper provision over a large part of the industry; and, as Lord Woolton says, the small pits could be supplied by some arrangement of travelling canteens.

* * *

The agricultural labourers are up in arms over the refusal of the £3 a week minimum wage which they have demanded. The National Union of Railwaymen is expected to put in for a substantial wage increase during the next few days. The engineers are pressing for an advance, on the ground that time-workers' wages are inadequate and earnings of both time-workers and piece-workers depressed in many cases by irregularity of work. The official answer, of course, is that further wage advances cannot be granted without leading to serious inflation, and that it is impossible under war conditions so to adjust wages that the workers will be able to maintain their pre-war standards of living. The Trade Union reply is twofold: first, that they will not accept a wages standstill until thoroughly adequate measures have been taken to control prices all round, and to stop all profiteering and evasion of the rationing regulations; and secondly that, now the income tax level has been lowered to include all the better paid wage-earners, it is plain justice that the workers still below income-tax level should not have the already low purchasing power of their wages reduced. These arguments are difficult to meet; but it remains true that all-round wage advances simply cannot be given without inflation ensuing. The obviously correct solution is to institute a system of State-financed family allowances.

A Restive House (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

The propaganda debate was memorable for two things; the unanimity with which Members deplored the Government's proposals, or rather its lack of proposals, for injecting vitality and meaning into our propaganda at home and abroad; it was also remarkable for the shocking ineptitude of Sir John Anderson's speech. Since war broke out the House has not infrequently shown its annoyance with Ministers, but never before has a Member of the War Cabinet been jeered at—the word is not too strong—from all sides of the House as Anderson was when he attempted to show that some genuine reorganisation of the home propaganda machinery was taking place. He left many Members convinced that in spite of lip service paid to the importance of propaganda the Government was completely unaware of its importance as a primary weapon in the conduct of totalitarian war It is obviously thinking of this war in the purely military terms of 1914–1918. Duff-Cooper at the close of the debate spoke with his usual lucidity; no Member has his capacity for extemporisation. He habitually speaks in perfect English and without notes. Naturally he was lukewarm in his enthusiasm for the Government scheme. The best he could say for feeble proposals was that he and his staff would do their best to make them work. The general conclusion was that the civil war on the propaganda front must go on. Most of those who were best qualified to speak on the subject failed, in spite of many attempts, to catch the Speaker's eye.

The Government is also, in the opinion of many Members, far too tender towards vested interests. We are short of tankers for carrying oil. From Government statements available storage capacity would appear to be no longer full to overflowing, yet the Government continues to allow pleasure motoring and the use of petrol to attend race meetings, football matches, cinemas and pubs. Geoffrey Lloyd's defence of the basic ration, which is realised to be a pleasure ration by everyone except the Petroleum Department, convinced no one. Shinwell raised the subject of the use of petrol for pleasure on the adjournment. Morrison in his reply was manifestly uneasy. Again, the Government is deferring to the vested interests of the private motorist, the bloodstock breeders and the racing enthusiasts.

Members of all parties are aware that this Government has lost its original drive. During the Battle of France it raised the enthusiasm of the people to fever heat so that they were ready to continue the fight undismayed by what looked like overwhelming odds against them. It brought about a great spurt in production from its previously low levels. To-day the man in the street is asking himself whether we can find the leaders capable of producing the necessary intensification of the war effort, and meetings are being called by workmen in arms factories bitterly protesting against managerial inefficiency and the slowness of production. As the Government continues to fail to cut through the vested interests which obstruct the war effort, the relations between capital and labour must become more and more embittered. Each blames the other; the only remedy is an Administration that will adjust methods to the needs of war.

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IDEAS OF THE WAR

AT first glance the shape of the world in 1941 is strikingly similar to that of 1917. But in 1941 it is the French who have been knocked out of the war while the Russians are still maintaining a powerful, and it may yet prove a decisive resistance, to the German armies. The battle of ideas also shows a similarity. The Mitteleuropa of the last war is transformed into the far more monstrous and dangerous vision of Hitler's New Order; against that as a world conception there is the aim of International Federation, which is fully shaped in Communist philosophy as a union of Socialist Republics, but which is cherished in some form by many groups which are not tied by any loyalty to the Third International. The Allied states maintain for the most part the conception of a return to the world of independent nation states, though it is fashionable to-day, as it was when League of Nations propaganda grew in the last war, to admit that the international anarchy must be tempered by some form of political confederation. In deference to the popular emphasis on the economic causes of war, this return to the *status quo* is now modified in Ministerial utterances by promises of social as well as of political security at the Peace. How this is to be achieved unless capitalism is transformed, we are not told. Inside this main conflict of essentially incompatible ideas controversy rages as it did in the last war amongst a large variety of groups who evolve special schemes to solve the political and economic contradictions. To imagine that because the first necessity is to win the war, these discussions of war aims and peace aspirations are unimportant, is totally to miss both the nature of the war and the lessons of history. British propaganda is chaotic because the objects of British policy are unknown, while the experience of the last war shows that when the time comes to make peace the groups that have insisted on thinking during the war have influence, and that the shape of the world to follow the war is moulded by the passions and ideas that have dominated men's minds during the fighting. The Treaty of Versailles was based on fear both of Germany and Soviet Communism, and it abounded in devices to keep Germany down and the U.S.S.R. isolated. The League of Nations, superimposed on this basis, was the product of entirely different and liberal ideas, designed to foster reconciliation, disarmament and security. It may be useful at this stage of the war to survey the field of ideas as they are displayed in a large variety of pronouncements and publications.

A rough classification of recent statements shows a few main trends of ideology. First is power, and the conflict of ideas about its uses. The German thesis, "Might is right," has practical foundations. When Goebbels talks of German power, for example, to and through Mr. Lindbergh and the American isolationists, he is indulging himself in the uncommon luxury of truth, for he is really describing the heavy German industry, the strongest and best organised material force in Europe. On this plane he is countered by Churchill's speeches, with their thundering prophecies of the increase of our war-planes. The appeal of the belief in power is to the instinct of self-preservation; a nation confident in its strength will fight to the death. On the other hand, people certain that they must die will fight recklessly, too; and therein lies the ineptitude of the Vansittart propaganda. Goebbels has capitalised it to persuade the Germans that if they lose the British will exterminate them; and so long as they believe that, why should they cease to support Hitler? As to the use of power apart from war, the Germans state that they will employ it to impose their military and economic supremacy upon a graded and degraded world. Here their opponents part company from them. Britain, the United States, and now Russia have disclaimed any desire to dominate or annex other countries. They have, however, failed to offer any convincing alternative to the Nazi organisation of power. The Pope's Christmas allocation of 1939, which coupled disarmament with "security for the effective implementing of such an agreement," has met with no official response. The League of Nations Union in June, 1941, pointed out that control of power must be established by the abolition of aggressive aims, and by backing an international authority with an international air force. The National Peace Council has swung from its former pacifist position to support of international control rather than abolition of armaments. Some people, on the other hand, are prepared to face constant wars, for their policies could have no other result. A typical instance is the Never Again Association, which would protect the Germans from themselves by three generations of British armed occupation, imposing just government and education upon "the principles of truth and decency."

The democratic governments, having destroyed the League system, are now unwilling to produce constructive political ideas. They are aware at bottom that for them there is no substitute for the principles they repudiated from 1931 on; yet they long to escape from them. The men of the Allied governments are not young; they are mainly conservative. Most of them can only think backwards, if at all.

It would appear that some of the Free Allies have ideas of regional federations; one for Poland and Czechoslovakia, another for the Balkan States. These propose combining for defence, and for an economic regionalism designed to protect a balanced economy and to save the people from the "sole buyer," Germany. For the rest, they would depend upon Britain to guarantee their independence. Now this is merely a slightly extended Little Entente, with Britain substituted for France as protector; on experience, it offers no hope. Moreover, it seems increasingly certain that American help will be needed for any scheme of stabilisation; and if the United States were offered a Europe split into groups spending half their income on armaments and tightlacing trade in autarchy, President Roosevelt would not be likely to take much interest in it. Private bodies are urging larger schemes. The League of Nations Union purposes a reconstituted League, with regional groups, such as Europe, including Russia, in which an inner ring of Powers would undertake the police-work of peace. There are several variants of Federal Union; of Europe to the Russian border; of Western Europe to the Rhine, joined with the United States; of the British Commonwealth and the United States. They are weak in failing to face the problem of Germany, save by terrific and continuous preparations for another war; and they have not solved in any practical way the problems of the weaker Europeans nor of India or the Colonial empires. They argue that only democracies, with a common standard of civilisation, can be trusted to keep their word. But on the basis of past experience can we say that democracies can be trusted?

Governmental evasion of political issues is not all escapism; it is due in part to their belated and bewildering discovery of the importance of economics. Worldinter dependence, the recognition of the crisis of capitalism, the need for planning are common ground between the Axis and the Allies; Mr. Matsuoka and Mr. Willkie are at one in talking of co-prosperity spheres. The difference lies in method; for the Nazi New Order is the super-imposition of race privilege upon regional regulation of trade and production. The secure markets which planning offers, to agriculture in especial degree, is a genuine benefit, and the Allies cannot do less than adopt some such scheme of their own. Except for some economists still bleating on the note of Ottawa, every authoritative voice, including the boom—of Printing House Square, has been calling for this for many months. The more advanced of the Free Ally leaders say that their nations, wretched as they are under Nazi economic enslavement, will never return to the old regime; they want regulated trade and production, though not as German colonies. Planning on a basis of free consent, with all countries benefiting from development, is an idea which may yet sweep the world. President Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms"—freedom of speech and religion, freedom from want and fear—were sounded in the chord most moving to Americans. Lord Halifax, and lately Mr. Eden, have hinted at the sort of freedom from want which Europe would gladly welcome. It has little resemblance to the old national sovereignties, and, indeed, it makes nonsense of the "independence" which America offers Iceland and which we and the Russians have promised to the occupied countries. Independence of the old type is gone—for Great Powers, as well as for the smaller states. On this head, even more than on the political future, a clear statement of Allied aims is imperative. Committees of learned advisers, meeting in secret, have all the satisfactions of superior knowledge. But great revolutions can only be carried out, as great wars can only be fought, on the faith of the people; and it is more than true that our people, and the nations of Europe, had our lesson to learn and our hope to follow.

Schemes for world reorganisation will multiply in the future. But an uneasy memory of the aftermath of the last war will haunt the minds of the planners. What happened then to the great moral appeals that had inspired a generation to accept death? Can capitalism "plan" this time with results less disastrous to mankind than its plans of twenty years ago? Will the war so modify the structure of Western capitalism as completely to change its outlook and impact on the revolutionary Europe that will presumably follow this war, as it followed the last? The joint capitalist struggle against the U.S.S.R. which Communists have so long declared inevitable and which others have thought likely, has been prevented by the capitalist deviation of Hitler, and to-day the propaganda of Moscow, which in the days of Lenin did so much to undermine the Kaiser's

Germany, is again flooding the harassed and bewildered people of Germany. Russian propaganda to-day is superb; it is not doctrinaire Communism; it is a direct human appeal to German workers and to the wives of German soldiers to revolt against rulers who have led them into these unutterable miseries and calamities. There is behind it the dynamic of common men's desire to be done with a system of war and class rule. On our side we can talk of freedom and indeed enjoy far more political freedom than is offered by Stalin's rule. But have we, in spite of our international ideals, our "decency" and our higher standard of living, a dynamic equally likely to appeal to common people in Europe? Without a change in the class structure of England we can make no such appeal with effect; in that case the propaganda-running in Europe will be left to Berlin and Moscow.

A LONDON DIARY

ONLY three and a half years ago, when I applied for a visa for my last trip to the United States, I gave the name of Raymond Swing as a reference in America. The U.S. Consul had never heard of him. Englishmen knew him well as one of the best American correspondents who had lost his job here through a change of newspaper ownership in the States, and who was already giving admirable broadcasts from America to England. To-day, he returns to this country an outstanding public figure, both here and in America. Few reputations are so well deserved. Swing's broadcasts during the war signalise a revolutionary change in British–American relations. They have removed a sour taste that lingered for more than a century of misunderstanding. The British have been "superior" from the days of Charles Dickens to Neville Chamberlain, and the Americans have been correspondingly sensitive. Raymond's feat has been to present the facts of American sympathy and help in such a way that we have felt their practical reality without the least hurt to our pride. The British are preposterously ignorant about America. Raymond packs whole chapters of useful and up-to-date information into a single businesslike and encouraging quarter of an hour. He has never disguised his view that America would more readily co-operate with an England that is fighting a "people's war," that the whole Chamberlain–Halifax, business and aristocratic, attitude, which lingers in England and is tied up with an Indian policy that Americans cannot understand, is a handicap in an America which is no longer governed by Wall Street. A Republican in politics, he is the more effective as an interpreter and an admirer of Mr. Roosevelt. On this short visit his time-table is ridiculously overcrowded. Apart from the job he has come to do here, he is broadcasting in the early hours of almost every morning to the United States. He seems to be booked to see almost every public figure in London. They tell me that ten Cabinet Ministers have accepted the invitation to the lunch organised by the *Sunday Express* on Thursday.

* * *

Every now and then one gets a vivid indication of the distance we still are from the state of mind necessary for fighting a war against Hitler. There are two urgent needs for labour on the home front. We shall be short of coal for domestic and factory consumption next winter unless much more is produced. The War Office seems to have prevailed on Mr. Bevin to accept the proposition that miners cannot be taken out of the Army even for a few months. How they could make any member of the War Cabinet believe that to complete the military training of twenty thousand miners is more immediately important than their work in the mines passes comprehension. It is decided, incredible as it may seem, to take the men from productive industry and then, even more incredible, it is decided not "to take" them but to "appeal" to employers to let them go. We did not issue an appeal to the men to join up; we conscripted them. But, if we want them for coalmining, the Government must, it seems, go on its hands and knees to employers for permission to use them in the way thought best for the national emergency. Again, large numbers of men are wanted for harvesting. Battalions of the Red Army or the German Army are of course regularly used for this purpose; but no, the War Office refuses. Odder still, we do not even use the German prisoners. The *Times* comment should be framed:

> No doubt the labour available from schoolboys' camps will be further supplemented by boys recruited locally. A few cases have been reported where the Army has been allowed to help in getting in the hay harvest, and there seems to be no reason why, in other suitable cases, units should not look upon harvesting as a valuable form of physical training. So far nothing has been said about prisoners of war—partly, no doubt, because the German prisoners here are so largely officers. . . .

Does the War Office think it beneath the dignity of a German officer who has baled out over this country to be asked to help in haymaking? Or what?

* * *

The four pillars on which the fight against Fascism now rests, as Dr. Wellington Koo said in his first speech at the Bowl of Rice Dinner organised by the China Campaign Committee on Monday, were well represented by Dr. Koo himself, by Lord Cecil, by Mr. Maisky, and by Colonel Lee and other distinguished Americans. A telegram from Foreign Minister Quo Tai-chi from Chungking arrived too late for the dinner. It stressed the same point, that at last the combination he had always worked for here had been achieved. The A.B.C. (American–British–Chinese) combination has been completed by the addition of the U.S.S.R. Most of the other Allied Governments were also represented at the dinner. I had the luck myself to sit opposite to Señor Negrin, whose Government would have been one of the most valuable of allies to-day but for the folly of British policy. Cheers greeted Mr. and Mrs. Maisky when they arrived, and shouts forced the Soviet Ambassador to speak to the eager, tightly packed and sweltering guests. What an astonishing transformation it all is! Here is China, treated only a few years ago by the *Times* as a colonial Power which was very properly having order imposed on it by Japan; now lauded in long leading articles in the *Times*, and, indeed, in almost every newspaper; and here is Russia accepted as an ally in all but name (and national anthem!) because Stalin, like Chamberlain and everyone else, has been double-crossed by Hitler.

* * *

I am not sure that this is a moral story, but it is certainly a story with a moral. It happens that I have a friend who has a wife, a baby and a firm resolution not to let war deprive his family of things the doctor orders—in this case, orange-juice. Finding that the process of ordering oranges for dessert in West End restaurants and putting the fruit in his pocket was a method of purchase quite beyond his means, my friend sought out and readily found a bootlegger of foodstuffs, who—the correct password given—was delighted to supply oranges and, for that matter, to satisfy every appetite, legal or illicit, besides. Never having met a food bootlegger, I accompanied my friend when he went to collect his oranges. Regarded without prejudice, the bootlegger was a nice little man. Cast admittedly in the mould of Pandarus, with a mild and deprecating eye, he was neither unduly greedy nor by instinct a criminal. Apologising for the fact that the oranges cost 8*d.* a dozen over the controlled price (and from certain dark hints thrown out, I gathered that the percentage added to definitely illegal sales of *rationed* food would be much higher), Mr. Grits—the grocer's shop was real but amazingly bare of stock to the casual eye—lamented with apparent sincerity the infamy of the "perishing awful racket wot blokes like me 'as to live on." Oranges procurable only by bribing a market salesman with a ham smuggled off a Norfolk farm by dead of night; new potatoes into whose purchase wholesale a gift of a pound of tea or a big bag of sugar entered as an essential factor; butter swapped for petrol coupons bought from a bench garage hand—from Mr. Grits' tale there emerged the picture of the immense ramifications of a black market whose intermediate dealings are on barter terms with an illicit consideration in kind imported into every transaction. And I was led to the conclusion, which Mr. Grits emphatically endorsed, that Lord Woolton can do nothing to stop this racket so long as hotels and restaurants are free to sell expensive meals in competition with their rivals.

* * *

The Food Ministry's G-men may wait and watch, "on information received," until they catch some unwary bootlegger selling a pound of butter to a member of the public for cash. But that sort of transaction is rare; and, when it occurs, extreme precautions to ensure secrecy of delivery are taken. The transactions in rationed goods are almost exclusively *between dealers in the racket:* the "outside," final purchaser—sometimes an individual like my orange-seeking friend, but in the vast majority of cases a caterer for a wealthy clientele—buys goods which are not officially rationed, but whose disappearance from the normal retail channels has followed immediately the imposition of a fixed price. The hotelier's defence is that he is not forbidden to serve any quantity of unrationed goods, and that if his establishment cannot produce oranges, strawberries, new potatoes, pure olive oil, plenty of cigarettes, and so forth, his customers will go elsewhere. So he must buy, buy when he can, buy at almost any price, with Mr. Grits and his hundreds of colleagues astonished at their own moderation. The solution is obviously difficult. But a sumptuary

law enacting that no meal served in any restaurant or hotel may exceed five shillings in price would effectively undermine the black market.

* * *

In the immense army machine, it is possible for minor officers to contravene the orders of the Government and the War Office. When conscription was brought in, the Minister for War promised that safeguards would be arranged against conscientious objectors being subjected to cat-and-mouse treatment in the army—imprisonment for refusal to fulfil military duties, release, and reimprisonment for a similar refusal. The provision was that any sentence by a court martial of three months' imprisonment should carry the right of appeal to the Appellate Tribunal, which might recommend discharge. Courts martial, it seems, are still evading this appeal by giving sentences short of the necessary three months, or by awarding "detention" which does not count as "imprisonment." About a hundred men, who all had registered as conscientious objectors on being called up, have received this type of sentence. The War Office has sent full and clear instructions for Presidents of Courts Martial to the Commands; these instructions appear to have been disregarded.

* * *

Lord Dufferin, in a lighthearted letter to the *Times*, suggests that this island has become "a birdless grove," owing to the exodus of our poets to the U.S.A. Where are his ears? Mine are sometimes almost deafened by the competing and elaborate wood-notes of Day Lewis, Spender, MacNeice, Rodgers, Betjeman, Derwent, Church, Dyment, Eliot, Gascoyne, Lehmann, Lucas, Madge, Palmer, Plomer, Read (to say nothing of Sir Robert Vansittart). I fancy that the only poet in America whom Lord Dufferin could name is Auden—and rumour has it that Auden was due to be drafted into the U.S. army on July 1st. Perhaps he will be stationed in Iceland—a country in which he has already found inspiration. Auden's departure has been used as a stick with which to beat all highbrows, but nobody seems to resent the absence of some more "popular" authors.

* * *

On Wednesday, X rang up a friend in the War Office. "Well," he said, "do you think the Russians will win the war for you?" His friend replied, very solemnly: "It's dammed serious. Some of us are very worried about it."

CRITIC

EXTENUATIONS

THE Commons debate shows war news in a state
That gives none but the foe satisfaction,
But it's proper to add, though the service is bad,
It's not due to official inaction;
The Ministry's stupor is blamed on Duff Cooper,
Who is muzzled by higher advice,
And ascribes inanition to the Service tradition
Of keeping hot news on the ice.

The Debate about food shows supplies are so good,
Despite every enemy rumour,
That nothing remains for Food Office campaigns
Except to confuse the consumer;
To find a good reason why all things in season
Must be sparsely doled out to the queue,
And avoid revolution over maldistribution
Is as much as Lord Woolton can do.

Though strategic retreat may appear like defeat
From forces less game and less gallant
It must not be supposed our reverses disclosed
An absence of tactical talent.
The House is agreed for the new war of speed
We have generals well-fitted to climb
And there's not the least doubt that just keeping them out
Takes the War Office all of its time.

Our mentors, though noble, are strictly immobile
And we'll never drive full steam ahead
Till the Service departments are ordered to tell,
And the Food Chief sees foodshops have foodstuffs to sell,
And the War Office gives up its dead.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Maurice Nadin.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Hitler Now Fighting for a Draw. By Maj.-Gen. Sir Digby Shuttleworth, K.C.I.E., C.B., D.S.O.—*South Wales News.*

According to a contemporary, which entitles the paragraph simply "Democracy," cigarettes are rationed at the depot of a certain north-country regiment. The ratio is set out on the notice board as: "To officers, 20 a day. To troops, 30 a week." But is this not justified by what each can afford?—*The Bulletin.*

The reason for placing the ballroom out of bounds to Army officers was that seating accommodation was limited, and on returning from the dance floor a private and an officer might find themselves wanting the same chair. It would not be fair to expect the private to give way, and it was entirely in the interests of the other ranks that the ban was put on.—*Star.*

"I say good luck to every young man who is going to join the Army. Kill all the Germans you can. Kill every one of them. You cannot win the war, if you are in the war, without killing people." These words, from Earl Winterton, M.P. for the Division, helped to launch Worthing's Youth Week on Monday. They were addressed to a large audience consisting mostly of boys and girls at the inaugural meeting at the Assembly Hall.—*Worthing Herald.*

The possessor of an income of £10,000 is left with only £3,168 for himself, and yet it is complained by some that there is still no equality of sacrifice on the part of the well-to-do.—*Daily Telegraph.*

THE MOOD OF AMERICA

[President Roosevelt's decision to take over the defence of Iceland was of course announced after the despatch of this article by Air Mail from the United States on June 23rd.]

THE traveller who reaches this peaceful hemisphere after a slow but uneventful sea voyage, spends several days in overcoming the first shock of bewilderment. I hardly venture even now to switch on the light in my bedroom without first pulling down the blind. I never cease to marvel at the opulence and variety of this nation's hospitable tables; I stagger when I pick up the continents of newsprint that issue from its daily press. My first experience was to recover my former awareness of the volume and width of this nation's life. Prize-fights and musical festivals; baseball and the movies; new gadgets that add to the comfort of its always comfortable material life; yesterday an effort by the President to win for the negro an equal place in industry; to-day some fresh phase in the hunt that pursues the Reds—here was a people living its own life, a people absorbed within its own Vast Continent by its own interests and concerns. I realised that for two years I had thought of this country as a factor in our own destiny, a factor which we hope to use for wider ends than its own. That is dangerous attitude and my first reaction was a sense of shame that I had come near to thinking of it as a tool in the strategy of liberation. That is bad tactics, as it is bad morals. If we are to reach this nation we must see its life as a rounded whole, and realise that it is an end to itself.

On a closer acquaintance I realised that the shadow of our war is never far from any American's thoughts. On the Atlantic seaboard, whether in New York or Baltimore, an English visitor meets only with the warmest sympathy and consideration. All day long he must answer solicitous questions about our experience under bombardment and especially about our rations. Searching the press and listening to the wireless, I have not yet heard even one timid syllable of apology for the Nazis. That is one main difference between this war and the last: this time there is no attempt, even by the isolationists, to state a case for the Germans. There is an undertone of criticism of ourselves—of our subjection to class, of our Imperialism, and above all our Indian record. The editor of one of the greatest and friendliest of American dailies told me that a day rarely passes without his finding on his desk three postcards reminding him of India. But even this is no more than an irritant. It was not our merits that induced the Americans to pass the Lend-Lease Act and it will not be our virtues that may draw them into the war. "Help Britain to defend America" is the characteristic slogan of our most active friends. The debate over future policy turns almost exclusively on the question whether

the President is exaggerating the danger with which a Nazi victory would confront America.

Over material aid the controversy is long-since ended. This nation will pour out its wealth without stint to ensure our victory, and few deceive themselves about our ability to repay this incredibly generous aid, even in the distant future or in kind. Controversy rages now only over the defects in the organisation of the economic effort: The press, take it as a whole, is critical of the Administration, bitter towards Labour and very timid when Big Business is to blame.

Over the perspective of further aid, in plain words, belligerent aid, I have learned to think with increasing caution. Americans will often answer my questions with a blunt declaration that they are "already in the war," but it would be impossible to overstate their reluctance and their total lack of belligerent enthusiasm. The civilisation of this people is in sullen, impotent revolt against the destiny that slowly drags it into the war. From many sources I have heard the same account of the state of mind of the young men who have been called up. They obeyed the summons sadly and feel no sense of adventure. Dread of war is strongest and most vocal among the students in the Universities, who will welcome any argument or any doctrine that rationalises their own shrinking. There has been recent evidence of this state of mind at Yale. It is probable that this attitude would change in some degree if America were actually in the war, but as yet this massive reluctance to face physical participation is the main fact that confronts the President and his advisers. A Gallup poll taken on May 16th asked the blunt question whether America should enter the war. There were 79 noes and 21 ayes. I am reporting what I cannot doubt, but I will add that three times from working men, one of them a sailor, I have heard another point of view. All three said they hated the thought of entering the war: all of them added that they knew it was America's duty to do it and all drew the conclusion that since it had to be done, it had better be done quickly.

My own conclusion after many talks with American friends who should be able to gauge the mind at least of the Eastern States, is that public opinion is now ready for any kind of naval action—convoys, the arming of merchantmen and the use of the patrolling planes and ships to sink submarines, I must add the qualification that in such measures public opinion would acquiesce passively: it does not clamour for them, it expects them without impatience: it has schooled itself reluctantly to regard them as inevitable. I watched its behaviour when the *Robin Moore* was sunk and I could detect no signs of excitement. I can imagine that after accepting some forms of naval action, Americans might soon come to tolerate a gradually extending use of their Air Force as an offensive arm: indeed, it is already patrolling the Atlantic and the Americans are proud of its share in locating the *Bismarck*. But I cannot imagine Americans consenting to the despatch of an expeditionary force to Europe. The utmost they might tolerate would be an expedition, let us say, to Dakar. *The New York Times* printed the other day a long and able article by its military expert, Hanson Baldwin, who reached the conclusion that in the long run the war can be won only by a military offensive on the continent of Europe, in which American mechanised divisions must join the British striking force. I drew the attention of the ablest of my American friends to this article. Not one man among them would swallow it: with varying degrees of ingenuity they all improvised their reasons for rejecting this unwelcome conclusion. On this subject the average man does not reason: his memory wallows in the mud of Flanders and he flatly says No.

The President is very properly bent on preserving the nation's unity, and my own decided impression is that if ever he crosses the line into war—if ever, in plain words, he orders shooting—it will be under clear provocation in defence of indisputable American interests. The more I see of this nation, the less I am inclined to risk a prediction. As for the Nazis, they may enjoy the sport of prodding and insulting the Americans; but will they risk a provocation so considerable that a reluctant Republic must be driven into the war for her own defence? But I am a newcomer, who has had to revise some of his more sanguine impressions: by way of balance, I might quote more than one prediction from a good source that America will be in the war without reserves in two or three months.

I will keep for another article some reflections on the British propaganda. But may I at once make my plea for greater frankness, not merely about our losses in the Battle of the Atlantic, but about our prospects on a broad survey? We should gain more than we should lose by stating (to take an imaginary case) that a ship laden with ball-bearings from Detroit was sunk in mid-Atlantic. That would win over every worker in Detroit to the case for convoys. Our totals of published losses should convey their lesson clearly with the aid of a readable commentary. But my main contention is that the time has come to tell the Americans plainly that we cannot win this war with material aid alone.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

A MANUFACTURER WANTS TO KNOW

AT the present time a small manufacturer owning and conducting the affairs of an "Essential Protected" factory finds himself, probably for the first time, working as part of an economy planned for use—war use—and only to a limited degree for profit. He is instructed by the Ministries what he is to make, and often the price at which the goods are to be made. His costs and accounts are scrutinised and his profits, if any, are limited. If he is interested in ideas for conducting industry so as to afford full employment and abundance for all, he cannot help examining the strength and weakness of the present arrangements, and thinking out how to profit by the lessons to be learnt in order to make full use of the nation's productive capacity after the war.

Some form of Government control of industry will probably be continued after the war. This much seems to be generally recognised by business men. Amongst Left-wing theorists there is busy speculation as to the political aspect of the change, but little is written about the technique it is proposed to follow in actually running the industrial machine. For most writing about Socialism seems to be strangely theoretical, and the manufacturer who tries to imagine himself working under a planned peacetime economy finds little to get his teeth into in contemporary publications.

We are, as has been pointed out again and again, faced with the choice of Socialism, of such a sort that every factory or business enterprise in the land will be owned and controlled by the State, and State-controlled capitalism where a proportion of the business enterprises are still nominally owned by or leased to the capitalist, the State making itself responsible for the distribution of the nation's economic resources according to its conception of national needs. Need we have any doubt as to which course will be followed in what Engels called "This most bourgeois of all nations"? Is it seriously believed that the Electorate will favour the production of standardised curtains, clothes, women's hats, radio sets and furniture organised on Post Office, B.B.C. or Supply Company lines? I can almost hear the reply from the Left: "Oh well, not everything, of course. We'd start with the most important services and industries; but obviously many consumer goods will have to be left to private enterprise for some time to come." Very well then, let us consider some of the practical problems which arise if there is full employment and booming industry under some such typical British compromise plan.

Many such problems are already obvious to those who are now managing factories, and amongst them are two which arise when unemployment and the "Whip of-Hunger" is removed. Firstly, there is the question of wages. Even if much of the nation's industry is to be controlled by the State, the *laissez faire* practice which leaves selling prices and cash wages to be settled by free competition is inherently unsteady, though political and other conditions may seem settled. Periodic slumps and booms are bound to arise just as a light canoe will rock at the slightest disturbance of the water. I believe that up to the outbreak of this war a margin of unemployed was essential to the running of industry, and that the employers unconsciously set up just the conditions required to make a margin of unemployed inevitable. Some alternative device to unemployment can no doubt be found which will serve the purpose of managers and workpeople, but until it is found the managers, as at present, are in for a difficult time, since they have no clear-cut policy when faced with recurrent demands for wage increases. For even if they wish to improve the lot of the wage earners they can see no sense in allowing cash wages and prices to go spiralling up and down as they did during and after the last war.

In normal times, and perhaps in wartime, cash wages should surely rest between the upper and lower limits of an "economic band." The Trade Unions in the past performed a useful function in securing that they did not fall *below* its lower edge, whereas employers had their own way of preventing them from climbing *above* the upper edge. But the processes of adjustment caused continual friction and waste, and were in themselves one of the main causes of unemployment.

The strike and lockout played a comparatively minor part in the employers' scheme of things. For the most part pressure on labour was exerted almost unconsciously by the level at which the employer fixed his selling prices. For at any time, under conditions free from Government interference, an employer has the choice of arranging

his selling prices at either one of two levels—an upper or a lower one. Both levels will give him exactly the same return on his capital, but if he chooses the lower price level he will himself be somewhat more busily employed—in the sense that he will have more to organise—he will have to employ rather more hands and perhaps a few more machines. He almost invariably chooses the higher level.

This choice, although the margin of unemployment will thereby be somewhat greater than otherwise, is not simply the result of laziness. He is acting in the only way Society has left open to him. For if every manufacturer drove his prices down to the lower of the two price levels, the margin of unemployment would be diminished it is true, but certain—from the employer's point of view—undesirable features would be introduced into his business life. Amongst them are:

(*a*) He realises, either unconsciously or from experience, that an excessive demand for labour leads to increased wage costs; if there is no official demand for a trade advance, competition for labour beyond a certain point will in itself drive up wages.

(*b*) In conditions of feverish industrial activity, when there are virtually no unemployed, the situation in the workshop is liable to deteriorate unless alternative means are introduced to maintain good order and industrial discipline. Amongst old-established firms and older employees, things are at present going satisfactorily enough, especially because the urgent need for active co-operation is now felt, but there is a minority not pulling its weight, and if the urgent need were not there conditions would be much worse. How obvious all this is to those who ran a works during the last war and in this! Why not, therefore, face the unpleasant fact that in peacetime at the final issue the only sanction an employer has to prevent slacking and disobedience is—fear of the sack. This gone, what has he left? Monetary rewards? But what is the sense in allowing the process of bribing to go on indefinitely? Is it surprising, therefore, that he goes on advancing his list prices and net quotations until the normal margin of unemployed is restored? For he knows deep down that if it weren't for that margin of unemployed his profits and his control would disappear. And yet haven't we seen again and again the slight improvement in trade with its consequent lessening of unemployment, immediately followed by the inevitable "squeeze" for a 10 per cent. advance in wage rates to be followed in the fullness of time by an advance on list prices of some corresponding amount; to be followed a few years later by compensating bad trade and a reduction in wage rates, or alternatively, if the pressure of unemployment is mitigated by insurance, by a permanent addition to the hard core of unemployment? Isn't it time the whole silly business was stopped?

But with part of the country's industry directly controlled by the State and part only supervised, what, I wonder, is to be the policy of the Trade Unions? Can they be relied upon to work out an alternative to this wasteful process? Trained and experienced in finding out to a penny just what "the traffic will bear," to negotiating and struggling for a "higher standard of living" for the workers, how will they behave if the standard of living can only be raised through improvements in the rate and quality of production? How fatally easy to buy popularity by according increases in cash wage rates to certain industries and thereby starting a general upward movement, possibly to the detriment of those industries still unprotected from ordinary competition. Can we not see this tendency going on right now?

The Dictators have their own way of dealing with injudicious demands for wage increases, as well as laziness and disobedience in the workshop. The nineteenth-century terrorism of unemployment has been replaced by a new terrorism, and, be it noted, as soon as the fear of dismissal is removed and most of the nation's productive capacity is in use, even in this country, too, there is a growing need for some alternative method of inducing people to stick at work. There is also the question of a dynamic.

The war has shown industry what can be done by controlled State purchases, and it seems that a post-war economy might well be founded on production of consumer goods stimulated by State buying and marketing, with an all-embracing State export scheme. But success in any schemes of this sort depends on facing up in all seriousness to measures for preventing spiralling of wages and prices, slacking and indiscipline on the part of both managers and workpeople.

These then are some of the many difficulties which are likely to arise in a typical British compromise plan. Failure to meet them will certainly leave the door open for reaction, and Socialists should, therefore, consider carefully the peculiarities of British industry, especially the position of the smaller firms, and in their publications show the managers and workpeople that they understand the practice as well as the politics of the matter. "Let us once get control and all will be well," they imply, but we have seen enough of the way things have gone elsewhere to be very suspicious of such a view.

R. D. BEST

A WORKER'S POINT OF VIEW

[The following article contains the first-hand experience of a woman munition worker who cannot, for obvious reasons, reveal her name or the location of the factory in which she works.]

LAST year I worked in a munition factory. This is how it happened. My husband died suddenly in 1938 leaving me just enough money to keep myself and my two young children, but when war broke out and prices and taxes went up, it just wasn't quite enough. So I began to think about a job. What could I do? It would have to be something with a fairly good wage, as I couldn't leave the children to fend for themselves, especially during the holidays, and that would mean paying someone to look after them.

The idea of a munition factory hovered in the back of my mind. I am as strong as anyone else, and I thought perhaps I should earn enough to pay a girl's wages and keep, extra taxation, and perhaps a bit over to go towards the children's school fees. Not much, you understand, because although I remembered during my girlhood in Ipswich during the last war munition workers made Pots of Money and became the New Rich, all that sort of thing was not going to happen in this war; the Government wouldn't allow it. That was all right, I thought. Fair's fair, and if I can make a little bit and at the same time do a decent job of work, what more can I expect? But the roundsmen I talked to at the door told me a different story. They wanted to be released from their present jobs and get into munitions, because you could make Big Money. Almost Anything. They knew people who did.

So in June 1940 I went to the Labour Exchange in our village and asked if there was any chance of work in a factory 2½ miles away, which for the sake of anonymity I will call the Soapsuds Factory. The clerk was very encouraging, and said that although you started at a low rate you could eventually earn Big Money; it depended on yourself; and he sent me to the Soapsuds Factory, where I was interviewed by the Labour Superintendent. He too was encouraging. He advised me not to start just yet, as they had only light machines paying 6*d*. an hour, but they were expecting the heavy machines at any moment, and then I could get 8*d*. an hour. "But," he added impressively, "that's only to begin with. After a bit you can earn Big Money—it depends entirely on you." When I asked how much, he waved his hands as though sweeping countless pound notes into the air and said, "Almost Anything."

Well, the thought of Big Money, let alone Almost Anything, turned the scales for me. The hours, he told me, were from eight till eight, sometimes day and sometimes night, except on Saturday, when they were from eight till five. No Sunday work, he explained magnanimously, They had tried it, but it was too much for the workers, and I was just beginning to think what a splendid fellow he was when he spoilt it all by adding, "You see, it didn't pay. We have to give double wages on Sunday, and as nobody can go on working for 12 hours a day for 7 days a week, they had to take a day off, and as they never took Sunday we really lost on it." So I was to wait a little while—ten days at the outside—for the Big Machines, and then I could take the first step towards Big Money.

I got a girl in the house the next day, a delightful Austrian refugee who had been suddenly cut off from her training as a T.B. nurse when the Government decided that aliens mustn't be employed in hospitals. I waited and waited, rather bothered about the extra one to keep and pay, but still with my eyes fixed on the Holy Grail of Big Money.

The summons came on August 14th, and I was to start work in two days. So on the 16th I started off on my bicycle at 7.20, because the journey there was uphill most of the way, with an appalling cart track for the last quarter of a mile. I clocked in, and began life as a cog in the armament machine.

That day I was taught how to use four machines, the first two very simple, the last two more tricky. The charge hand showed me how to work them. You put this in here, and that in there, hold it so, switch on the current, and there you were. But sometimes there you weren't. Cutters would break, drills would snap out at you, and you were rated by the charge hand who in his turn was rated by the storekeeper. If you didn't do so-and-so when you put this in here, the cutter was liable to break; but you weren't told that until you had broken two or three cutters, wasted your own time, the charge hand's

time, the fitter's time, and material. After that I was wiser, and when I was shown a new machine I used to say, "Will you please tell me the snags? What is likely to go wrong or break, and what can I do to prevent it?" It worked very well.

You say that all this has no bearing on absenteeism, but I'll show you how it has. If you are going to work a machine quickly and carefully, you must keep your eye on it. You can work quickly and carelessly while you have a nice chat, or slowly and carefully, but not quickly and carefully. Now as I had my eye on the Big War as well as on the Big Money, and wanted to turn out as much as I could, I kept my eye on my machine, and even won a stray word or two of praise from the sorely-tried charge hand. But to do this from eight till eight is a great strain on the nervous system. It is true there was a ten-minute break for tea at 11 a.m., 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., in addition to the hour off for dinner, but I found that by 4 p.m. I had to spur myself on by trying to see how fast I could work, and after 6 p.m. I could hardly work at all. Let me give two illustrations.

One day I was working a machine which although it was tricky was physically easy. You had to turn a handle which was very slightly harder to turn than a sewing machine handle. During the afternoon it got stiffer and stiffer, but the machine wasn't hot, so I didn't think it wanted oiling, but when at 6 p.m. it was so stiff that I couldn't move it, even when I used both hands and pushed with all my might, I appealed to the oiler. He looked at it, gave the handle a light push, and round it went. "It's only that you're tired," he explained. "It often happens." So although my mind was on the Big Money, I clocked out, arguing to myself that it was better to lose two hours' pay and come back refreshed in the morning than to take money for nothing and be too tired to work well the next day.

The second illustration is this. One day, after a milder blitz than usual, I went to work feeling fresh, and to see how fast I could work I counted the products of my first two hours' work as I did them. (By the way, I asked the charge hand how my results compared with skilled capacity, but he didn't know; they never bothered to check them.) In the evening when I had got to the stage of not knowing how to go on, I thought that if for an hour I tried to beat my morning's record it would help me to forget my tiredness. So I went hell-for-leather, and the net result of the hour's work was just half the work I had done from 9-10 in the morning.

The hours are too long. I can't speak about a man's capacity, but I don't believe women can work *well* for twelve hours a day, especially when you have no restful interval. Our tea-drinking ten minutes' were spent in the workshop, and our dinner hour was spent either in a canteen which was permanently semi-blacked-out, or in eating sandwiches by the roadside, or, if it was wet, in the workroom. If there had been some semblance of a rest room where we could have spent a few minutes of our dinner hour I believe we should have been more refreshed.

Then what about my fellow workers? Nice friendly people, all of them, but I noticed that several of them would disappear from the workshop four or five times a day and stay out for twenty minutes or longer. At first I felt critical, but I soon realised why they did it. It was impossible to keep on a full day, so they had no qualms about conserving their energy and going off to the cloakroom for a chat rather than losing money by going home early. Some of them would quite blatantly switch off their machines, rest their arms on the table and talk to their next-door neighbour. At first I blamed them, but I quickly transferred my censure to the system which led them to do it. Some lived in more blitzed areas than I did, or had a longer distance to travel, and had no one to get a meal for them when they got home. It's difficult to work hard for twelve hours a day and then go home to do a bit of washing and ironing, and a bit of cleaning up, and perhaps spend most of the night looking after your children or your little brothers and sisters during raids.

I rarely heard the charge hand reprove them. On the contrary, I think he had some sympathy for them. One day, when I had a finger badly strained and swollen through constant pressure on an electric drilling machine, I asked if I might go to another machine for a little while to rest it. He said, "Why don't you do as the others do and go to the ladies' room for half an hour?"

The Big Money seemed as nebulous as the Holy Grail. I asked my workmates when we got a rise. "Rise? What rise?" I told them about Big Money and Almost Anything. "Oh *that*! Mr. Blank always tells you that, but actually you never get a rise unless you fuss for it, and then if you keep on fussing for about three months you may get an extra penny an hour if you're lucky."

I asked one of the older men what he thought about eight-hour shifts. Difficult, he said. Not enough workers. Then why in Heaven's name, I thought, did they compile the National Register last October? Why on earth didn't they call every one up as soon as it was completed? Why are there still so many unemployed? If you had an 8-hour shift, you need not have all the machinery switched off for so many short breaks. Multiply those breaks by 7 and again by the number of factories in the country, and the answer if not a lemon is a large weekly loss of output. If you had eight-hour shifts, you would do away with absenteeism, not merely the complete days of absence and the shortened days which are noted on the clock register, but the half-hour chatting absences, mounting in each case to something like 12 hours a week, which are officially unnoticed.

Don't lure the people on with talk of Big Money. Call up everyone you can, give them good conditions, reasonable hours, a satisfactory wage, and you will have a body of workers who will do Almost Anything.

E. C.

OUR PROPAGANDA TO GERMANY

THE recent Parliamentary debates on propaganda concentrated mainly on the machinery of propaganda rather than its quality. The principal demand put forward was for a Minister of Information who should be in supreme command of his department, subject only to the control of the War Cabinet of which he should be a member.

To those of us who are more interested in the substance of the message than in how it is got across, the chief merit of this proposal seems that it implies recognition of propaganda as a major problem of strategy and would entail bringing to bear upon the problem the minds of the whole Cabinet, and especially of the Prime Minister himself. We see no evidence that this is happening at present. It looks as though propaganda was now regarded as a useful, but rather unimportant, sideshow which can be delegated to underlings, carefully controlled so that they can do no harm.

If that is so, it is disastrous, and especially so as regards one section of propaganda—that aimed at Germans themselves. It means that we are neglecting one of the most important aspects of the offensive against Germany—the psychological offensive. Not, of course, that this is entirely neglected. Richard Winner's article on "Speaking to the Germans" in this paper of June 7th, in its description of the B.B.C. German broadcasts, broadly confirms the impressions gathered from intelligent anti-Nazi refugees. These say that the talks are excellent in technique and often good in substance, but lack co-ordination, and sometimes make crashing blunders of taste and tact. But their principal criticism is one for which those nameless, hidden speakers cannot be held responsible—that they convey no clear, decisive message calculated to convince German listeners that they have more to gain by our victory than by Hitler's, and should regard us not as enemies but as deliverers. How can they give such a message without a clearer mandate for it than is contained in any existing declaration of British policy? They have nothing to go on, but cautiously and obscurely worded statements which imply, but nowhere say plainly, the things necessary to rally those in Germany who are our allies already and to turn waverers into allies.

Why such ambiguity? Is it because the Cabinet and especially the Prime Minister have never really given their minds to the problem, and therefore halt between two opinions—the Vansittart view, which lumps all Germans, except a negligible minority, together and typifies them as the "butcher bird," and the view that there is a public within Germany worth appealing to. Hence, they make just enough concession to the second view to allow the present broadcasts and (some of them) to refer in their speeches to "Hitler's Germany," thereby implying that there is another Germany. In the debate of July 3rd, Mr. Eden was actually rebuked by Lord Winterton for doing this! But they do nothing to rebuke in their turn those who are actually playing the part of caddy boys to Dr. Goebbels, supplying him with just the sticks he needs to play his strokes. And by the inadequacy of the appeal they make to anti-Nazis in Germany, they are missing priceless opportunities.

Consider first the argument which the Vansittart school is putting into Goebbels' hands. They enable him to say in effect to his people: "You Jews, Communists, Social Democrats, Liberals, you intellectuals, you grumblers who don't like the privations that war imposes on you, all of you who have dared to criticise our *Führer* and have been justly punished for it, see what would happen if the British won the war. We have chastised you with whips, but the British would chastise you with scorpions. They say it themselves. They make no distinction between Germans. They aim at the destruction and subjugation not only of Nazi Germany, but of the entire German people."

The weakness of our propaganda, both in what it says and what it fails to say, has been discussed in a number of books. Two recent publications are by German refugees: Sebastian Haffner's brilliant little book, *Offensive Against Germany* (Warburg and Secker, 2s.), and a pamphlet by Heinrich Fraenkel, *Vansittart's Gift for Goebbels* (Fabian Society, 2d.). Here are some of the points made by either or both of them :—

Our potential allies in Germany are not, as are the natives of German occupied territories, disarmed, and so powerless to help us except by industrial sabotage and passive resistance. They are part of a conscripted nation, actually members of the armed forces or relatives and friends of such men. Not now, but when the tide of war begins to turn against Hitler, their chance will come for surrendering, throwing down their arms or turning them against their oppressors.

The victory of 1918 was not brought about solely by military successes or by the economic blockade. President Wilson's Fourteen Points did much to weaken German resistance by making war weary troops and a hungry people feel that they had a future to look to beyond defeat.

But the German people are not united behind their Government. Why suppose that the anti-Nazi majority of 1933 has been converted to Hitlerism? During the intervening seven years they have suffered repressions and persecutions and a spying system which tormented not only Jews and Communists but all whose political views were not 100 per cent. Nazi, and all who, irrespective of politics, really believed in Christianity, or hated cruelty, or had some respect for intellectual integrity, or resented seeing their own children taken out of their control and made to spy upon them. Was that an experience likely to produce conversion? Admitting that Hitler's military victories and diplomatic successes may have dazzled and bemused millions into a genuine admiration for him, may there not be other millions, intellectually and morally the best of his former opponents, who are revolted by his cruelty, his treachery to friends at home and allies abroad, his shameless mendacity and vulgar boasting?

As to positive evidence of these reactions, have not the Nazis themselves supplied it by the hundreds of thousands whom they have immured in prisons and concentration camps, by their innumerable prosecutions and harsh punishments for producing illegal literature, inciting to sabotage, listening to foreign broadcasts and other forms of so-called treason? German official statistics show that in a single year, the frontier police effected 120,286 confiscations of illegal literature, and that takes no account of the quantity successfully smuggled abroad or produced for internal distribution. How otherwise than by such underground activities do those of the Vansittart school expect the German opposition to make itself felt at present?

As to numbers, numerical estimates must be largely guesswork. The number of secret enemies of Hitler in Germany must run into millions and must have been swollen by several more millions since his aggression upon Russia. Here we have the material of a possible Fifth Column which may have a value for us out of proportion to its numbers.

It seems likely that it is just their failure to perceive this last fact which has led to the extraordinary belittling of the importance of propaganda within Germany. Unimaginative Englishmen seem unable to believe that any German whose support is worth having can possibly do other than desire a German victory. Mr. Duff Cooper said in the debate of July 3rd :—

"Even Germans who are not Nazis want to win the war."

How does he know? Would he still say that since Hitler attacked the Soviet Union? If it were universally true, it would mean that British propaganda had been indeed a failure, since it had not convinced even the bitterest anti-Nazis that we could offer them something better than a perpetuation of the Nazi hell. But it is against all the probabilities. Why assume so great a difference between anti-Nazis within Germany and those who escaped overseas? We have tested the latter. A year ago most of our German refugees were interned. The great majority have been released after passing through the hair sieve of the Security Services. Nearly 700 have satisfied the extremely stiff test of Categories 19 and 23, which require them to prove that they can be trusted to support our cause under all circumstances. Over 2,000 wear British uniform within the Pioneer Corps. A British captain in one of the German-Austrian companies of that Corps wrote recently after consulting his fellow British officers, that the majority of their men wanted to bear arms so that they could "Have a go at Hitler." Many of them had already fought bravely for us in France before Dunkirk. Are we to regard these men, as some stupid Englishmen evidently do, as traitors and renegades because they are willing to fight against their own countrymen? There is another explanation. Some of them are real Germans. Aryans who, like Sebastian Haffner, "sees in a British victory the only hope for the rescue and regeneration of my own country." Others—the majority—are Jews, who, because Germany has repudiated them, have repudiated Germany for ever. They look to a future elsewhere. Both sorts have their counterparts still in Germany. Those of the Opposition who escaped were the lucky few. Many remain perforce, some of the best deliberately, so as to carry on the fight. All these are part of a potential Fifth Column which will yet arise in Germany. Have we so many allies that we can afford to neglect them?

But what are we doing by our propaganda to hearten those convinced already and to supply them with arguments for convincing waverers that true patriotism for Germans, and something better than patriotism for all, should range them on our side, because this is not a war of rival nationalities, but of ideas, a conflict between Civilisation and Barbarism? Where are the arguments to convince the self-regarding masses who care little for ideas that the things they do care for—peace, butter instead of guns, domestic privacy, freedom from oppression and spying—will be better secured by Hitler's defeat than by his victory? Much of all that is implied already in speeches by Mr. Churchill, Lord Halifax, Mr. Eden. It needs only to be made more definite, chrystallised into brief, simple broadcasts and leaflets, above all, hammered home by constant repetition with variety enough in illustration and methods to make it worth attention by those who listen and read at the risk of their lives. What evidence have we that this problem is receiving the attention it deserves from the men at the top, above all from a Prime Minister who is himself a supreme master in the art of propaganda at its best?

ELEANOR RATHBONE

COOK'S

How romantic were the beginnings of the firm of Thomas Cook and Sons, which celebrated its centenary a few days ago! The story, as it is told in a paragraph in the *Sunday Times*, moves one like a page from Samuel Smiles. "It was," says the writer, "on 6th July, 1841, that a former gardener's boy, who had become a temperance worthy, organised a shilling trip from Leicester to a temperance meeting at Loughborough. It was so successful that the original Thomas Cook was encouraged to give his whole time to such ventures." That seems to me to be the most impressive opening to an epical narrative since Virgil wrote the first lines of the *Aeneid*. I wish some fine scholar like Mr. G. M. Young would turn it into Latin verse on a level with that in which Virgil introduced the adventures of a hero whose travels were almost parochial in comparison with those of the former gardener's boy who had become a temperance worthy. How small a thing an excursion from the shores of Troy to Carthage would have seemed to Thomas Cook when once he realised that there are other things worth seeing on the Five Continents besides temperance meetings at Loughborough! All the ports and happy havens of earth gradually became to him and his sons places to visit, whether temperance meetings were held at them or not. The river cities of China, the lagoons of the South Seas, the Great Divide in the Rocky Mountains that sends its waters flowing impartially to the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans—Aeneas knew nothing of these, but Thomas Cook and his sons knew.

It seems to me rather significant that travel on the grand scale should be so closely associated with Puritanism throughout the ages. Perhaps there is something in Puritanism that gives energy to the imagination and turns dreams into action. Consider how widely those early Puritans, the Irish saints, wandered, visiting not only the far nooks of Europe, but the coasts of South America. They cared as little for difficulties of travel as migratory birds. St. Ia set out from Ireland to the Cornish coast on a floating stone and, having reached it, founded a church at St. Ives. No pagan Dublin tippler would have trusted himself to so unseaworthy a craft. In later ages a revival of Puritanism sent the Pilgrim Fathers across the Atlantic in the *Mayflower*, a ship that to the eye of an Epicurian must have looked scarcely more inviting than St. Ia's floating stone. Then, in the nineteenth century, when the Evangelical Movement was at its height, a passion for travel swept over England such as had never been known before in the history of the world. Travel which had until then been a hobby of a few of the rich became the dream of the not very rich, till in the present century the enthusiasm had spread to the almost poor. The democratisation of travel had never taken such

enormous strides since the world began; and the lakes of Italy and the islands of Africa were brought within the range of men and women whose incomes were only a few pounds a week. Travel, I admit, in a perfect world would be free, like reading in public libraries; but what a gigantic advance was made towards this ultimate freedom as a result of the work of the grand Puritan families of Cook, Lunn and Frame!

I am not a traveller by instinct myself. I could have been content, I think, if I had had an income, to spend all my life in my native island. I have never wanted to go on a long sea voyage or to see Africa or Asia, or anywhere else beyond Athens, and I cannot have longed very badly to see Athens for I have never gone there. I came to England itself reluctantly, not through the desire for work, but through the need of work. It was only under pressure that I went to France for the first time. I paid my first visit to Italy—still a Paradise in the memory—chiefly because some one else wanted to go there. I hesitated before allowing a friend to drag me to Spain. When I was asked if I would like to go to Canada with all my expenses paid I answered with a perfectly honest "No," and but for persuasion that almost amounted to compulsion I should probably never to this day have seen an iceberg or whale or Quebec.

This attitude to travel I impute to the fact that, though a Puritan in philosophy, I am not a Puritan in practice. The pleasure-loving Lotus-eaters, it will be remembered, wanted merely to stay where they were, and in this respect I have probably always been a Lotus-eater. Not that I dislike the thought of short journeys. If I had lived in Leicester in the days of the first Thomas Cook and heard that there was to be a shilling trip to a temperance demonstration at Loughborough, I feel fairly sure that I would have ventured on the trip. I like visiting near places. If there is a cathedral or a race-meeting within driving distance, I am drawn to it as by a magnet. I will go out of my way to see a ruined abbey or a popular seaside resort or even Roman remains. There are few things that I enjoy more than such small-scale travel—dawdling at Bath or Wells or Brighton.

Yet I doubt whether I have got more pleasure from these voluntary excursions than from enforced travel to more distant places. I like travel more than the prospect of travel, and I like most places when I arrive there. To land at a French port for the first time is to experience something akin to the rapture which Keats felt on first opening Chapman's *Homer*. It is easy to exaggerate one's emotional responses on such occasions, but the sight of a new country, with people of a new kind, houses of a new kind, and landscapes of a new kind, does undoubtedly make us feel a little above ourselves as though we were looking at a strange piece of the earth in the lovely revealing light of dawn. The very food seems food for more than mortals. I have felt this morning excitement most of all in Italy, with its hill towns, its olives, its vines, and its white bullocks in the ploughs. I suppose I ought to have guessed from books and photographs what Italy was like, but I had only the faintest conception of what it was like till I saw it. Canada, before I had crossed it, was to me merely a pink waste of space on a map. "Unimaginable" is a vague and rhetorical adjective, but every country that I have not visited remains unimaginable to me. I have no real notion of what India or Persia or Arabia looks like—no notion comparable with the India or Persia or Arabia that I should see within 24 hours of arriving in it. Hence, though I do not wish to travel, I rate the pleasures of travel very high, and would not have missed a single one of my few experiences of travel for half a year's income tax. Such countries as I did visit—France, Italy, Spain, Canada, and even Switzerland, despite the fact that it is overcrowded with mountains—have all through memory become part of my being—a possession for ever, as the temperance meeting at Loughborough must have been to many of the citizens of Leicester a hundred years ago.

Hence I think Thomas Cook senior deserves a *Cookiad* to celebrate his achievement and that of his sons in bringing the pleasures of travel within the reach of such a multitude. It may be complained that he made travel too easy and so robbed it of the spice of hardship that made it attractive, no doubt, to the Puritan temperament of the Pilgrim Fathers. It is my opinion, however, that travel cannot ever be made too easy. Always one will find that one has to get up some day to set out at five in the morning or that one is tormented by mosquitoes, or that a foreigner on the train hates fresh air or that one has one's pocket picked or that the Mistral is blowing or that raw Calvados is the worst drink in the world next to Strega. There will always be enough discomforts in travelling to keep one's spirits up. In retrospect, these take their place among the pleasures of travel.

Though I have often sought the collaboration of Thomas Cook, however, in making preparations for foreign travel, I have never been able to bring myself to take part in one of his conducted tours. There is an egotistic kink in me that can no more take part in community travelling than in community singing. I do not like standing in a bunch before one of the wonders of the world and being lectured to about it when I could learn far more out of a guide-book if I were alone. Only once have I been on a conducted tour, and that was through the Hardy country in a charabanc, when our guide at one moment called on us through a megaphone to look up a lane, which he said contained a farm which was the scene of Thomas 'Ardy's famous novel, *Aw'y from the Maddeneen Crahd*. It was not a Cook's tour, but even on the best-conducted tour I should not be able to see things properly if some one were always telling me about them. Other people, fortunately, are more human. They have the fine communal feeling of the men and women of Leicester who set out a hundred years ago under the guidance of Thomas Cook on the shilling trip to the temperance demonstration at Loughborough. Under the same leadership millions of men and women have since then travelled to every height and hollow, to every nook and corner, of Europe and further, and enjoyed it as much, as I should have enjoyed going to the temperance demonstration. That, I think, is an achievement of which Thomas Cook, as he looks down from another and even more unimaginable (though not more real) world, may feel proud. Y. Y.

NO DISCHARGE

I DO not believe that Heaven and Hell are in different places,
I do not believe that the utmost anguish of the damned
Could ever damp the bliss of neighbouring Saints.
I do not believe there have ever been complaints
From any of the Twenty-four Elders or Seven Spirits
About things like the smell of brimstone. "At first it seemed
strong,"
They confess, "but one does not notice it for long,
And we keep our incense burning night and day."
"While as for groaning and gnashing of teeth," the angels say,
"What with the noise of golden harps and new song
"They scarcely worry us at all." To a recent guest
Shy at first amid so much goodness, wondering
Whether one can ever really be friends with the Blest,
Gazing down at the unconsumable Phoenix nest . . .
At the obstinate host whose daily bread is destruction,
Yet none can cease to suffer by being destroyed . . .
To such, a hospitable Elder will often come
Saying, "Meet me here when it's dark. You have never enjoyed
Beauty on earth such as I will show you to-night,
The fires of Hell reflected in the Glassy Sea."
The hours of evening pass; his golden crown, a little tight,
Tires him at first, his unaccustomed wings
Bewilder him, his fingers on the golden strings
Find disconcerting music, and his own voice
Startles him with its raptures when he sings.
Darkness drops; he stands by the smiling Elder
Wing to wing. Shall he look up or down?
At the rose-leaf Phantom caught in this glacier of Heaven?
At the scarlet Fury prancing over Hell-town?
"It's wonderful to look at, isn't it?" an Elder once said,
"Surely this alone makes it worth while to be dead!"

So Heaven and Hell live side by side
And such troubles as happen are of the mildest kind.
Now and again the dull, the gentle damned
Stir, and some salvaged Lucifer will try
To organise revolt. Which Heaven does not mind.
What does it mean? A few lost spirits clutching
Charred banners with the motto "We want wings,"
Or "Harps for Hell," or "Golden Crowns for all."
The unpresentable, scrap-heap Lucifer flings
A written protest over Heaven's wall.
"They're bound to answer," "This time they must do some-
thing . . ."
The meek spirits whisper, waiting outside.
Hours go by. Suddenly a terrible light
Flashes over them. Is it some new device
For blistering Hell . . . for cutting off their retreat?
No! That transcendant whiteness is the Angel of Day
Telling them quietly but firmly to go away.

ARTHUR WALEY

THE LAUGH WE WANTED

Blithe Spirit begins droopily with a cocktail-shaker and saddening middle-class jokes at the expense of the parlour-maid. But soon a riotous entry by Miss Margaret Rutherford recovers our attention, and the theme of the farce is exposed. Mr. Coward is concerned, as in his last play, with a *ménage à trois*, but this time he offers us a man, a woman and a ghost. The man, Charles, is a pompous, philandering novelist—low-brow, no doubt, since he spent his honeymoon playing golf at Budleigh Salterton; his wife is beautiful, and, in the worst sense of the word, capable; the ghost is his first wife, Elvira, a ravishing slyboots, irresistible, very verdigrised and dug-up looking, with a scarlet mouth and a dress designed by some Stygian Molyneux. (There is evidently lip-stick in limbo, but no rouge.) She is, in any case, so irresistible that Charon seeing might forget that he is old and she a shade. The husband (and the audience, of course) can see and hear her—Ruth, the first wife, cannot. The notion has a Victorian flavour and might have been invented by the admirable Anstey. Mr. Coward manages it with characteristic adroitness, and before the fun is over, the triangle has changed into one man and two ghosts. For Elvira tries to murder Charles, and kills Ruth by mistake. Why she should wish to bring her husband into her life beyond the grave remains unexplained. All the illustrious dead are at her disposal, it appears, and one would expect her to like Casanova or the Duc de Richelieu or Byron better than her intolerably self-satisfied husband. And by the end of the play, she does wish to escape from him, in fact all three long to be rid of each other. Have they not spent all their time bickering? This is the one fault of this madly amusing farce, Mr. Coward's old, besetting fault—his belief that nothing is such fun as a good row. He always gets his laugh, so that it may be lily-livered in me to object. But is there not something at once prep-school and neurotic about this devotion to slanging-matches? Mr. Coward is clever enough for anything, clever enough even to write a comedy without a squabble. How I wish that he would try!

The casting, acting and production are flawless. Miss Fay Compton is skilfully ungay, Mr. Cecil Parker plausibly self-centred, Miss Kay Hammond easily captivating. (And at one moment, expressing terror and distress, Miss Hammond reveals a wealth of unexpected possibilities). Miss Ruth Reeves and Miss Moya Nugent play smaller parts with no smaller skill. Miss Margaret Rutherford, as the medium, sometimes threatens the whole fantastic edifice by introducing a breath of reality. Her groans are too credible, her *backfischery* too pathological. (She is a character oddly reminiscent of those in Mr. Arthur Marshall's monologues, even using the same expressions.) Her happiness at having produced a ghost is positively painful to watch. I would gladly go to the play again only to see her. I shall in fact go again to see the whole cast in this opportune and extravagantly funny play.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE MOVIES

"Pimpernel Smith," at the Odeon.
"Western Union," at the Gaumont.
"Penny Serenade," at the Regal.

The best film of the week is the V sign. No, it wasn't put on celluloid and perhaps never will be; but it is a bit of film all the same. You remember when this catchy device was first used to start people humming? It was with the theme song of René Clair's *Sous les toits de Paris*, sung in snatches, whistled, tapped by everyone in the film; and from that the tune spead all over France and the world. I am sorry to see that Noel Coward has been asked to put over a V song; he's hardly the right man. But Clair is. Clair could produce in a couple of reels the offhand answer to *Baptism of Fire* we should all like to give.

The point is that it would be offhand and irresistible: the sort of propaganda the Nazis find it most difficult to reply to. *Pimpernel Smith* is a quiet shot in that direction. Leslie Howard has produced, directed and acted the chief part in this film himself; and he is very taking with a silhouette familiar in English adventure. Sherlock Holmes, the Scarlet Pimpernel, Raffles and Lord Peter Wimsey are all variants of this now popular hero. Mr. Howard's new Pimpernel perpetuates the legend that behind the most scholarly of specs, the most languid or goofy of manners, lurks a man of action. His archaeology professor, in love with Aphrodite Kallipygos and detester of the female student, all tweeds and tobacco and forgetfulness, is endearing in either of his roles—for he turns out, of course, to be also the daredevil head of an organisation for rescuing scientists and artists from Germany (this is before the war). The mingling of excitements and the battle for freedom has been done with admirable tact; and party stupidity rather than private lusts is the line taken against the Nazis. Francis Sullivan provides some pretty satire in his embodiment of a fatty tyrant; and Mary Morris, as a refugee's daughter, survives plot and counter-plot and cross-examination with more than the usual appeal of distress. In fact *Pimpernel Smith* is a success all round, for it romps home as adventure which will thrill even devotees of Charlie Chan. Mr. Howard has gauged his effects on audiences with some precision. Among the Professor's students, for example, there is a young American dazzled by English modesty and exploit. This should keep our peckers up, besides exporting well.

Another good popular film is Fritz Lang's thriller made out of the early days of the Western Union Telegraph Company. The wire has to go across Indians' country, and besides Redskins there are white bandits disguised as Indians. All the thrills, from hatchet-throwing to forest fires, are included, and the whole thing is steeped in Technicolour. Colour is improving. Lang brings off some spectacular cloud effects, and the scorching plains with striated rocks and herds of bison are lovely to look at. There are still unpleasing distortions, particularly the electric blue moonlight in which *Western Union* abounds. But besides getting much clearer and quieter detail everywhere, Lang also begins to use colour with an eye to composition. Unluckily, *Western Union* was followed by a Mickey Mouse—*The Little Whirlwind*, not Disney's best—and the flat washes and copy-book tints blew the best of Lang out of the window.

Penny Serenade is long enough to enjoy, to sleep through, and then enjoy again. (I may add that, on a very hot morning, I followed every second of it.) Good sentimental films are rare, and Hollywood has lately been trying its utmost to bring off sentiment with a *recherche du temps perdu*. The technique is this. A woman (it has to be a woman) reaches a climax in her life; the dramatic decision (choosing a husband among lovers; leaving the man she is in love with) is suspended while we are shown the episodes leading up to this situation. Throughout *Kitty Foyle* Ginger Rogers talked to her reflection in the mirror; in *Penny Serenade* Irene Dunne, about to leave her husband (Cary Grant) puts on record after record among her favourite dance tunes, and each brings back an episode in her married life. The framework of both these films, and especially of *Penny Serenade*, is heavily and monotonously sentimental; you think of Miss Dunne spending hour after hour with her awful gramophone while Uncle Applejack (Edgar Buchanan) is waiting with the bags packed outside. And yet, like *Kitty Foyle*, the film has very good stretches, and there is considerable originality in the domestic comedy and heartaches involved in adopting a baby. This wife, you see, can't have a baby of her own, and it's the thing she wants most. Irene Dunne gives a charmingly individual performance, and Cary Grant acts and doesn't merely "hemingway." An anthology from *Penny Serenade* would reveal some of the best close-ups and the most realistic treatment of sentiment Hollywood has achieved for many months. But if you go, you have to make your own anthology.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, July 12th—
- Organ Recital with Madeau Stewart, Holy Trinity, St. Marylebone, 3.
- Opening of Promenade Concert Season, Royal Albert Hall, 6.30.

SUNDAY, July 13th—
- Prof. G. W. Keeton: "The British Army, Past, Present and Future," Conway Hall, 11.
- Debate: "The Social Significance of Jazz," 9 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2, 6.
- Dr. Hans Flesch: "Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*," 36 Upper Park Road, N.W.3 7.15.

MONDAY, July 14th—
- Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch. Dr. Muller Sturmheim: "International Public Works After the War," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2, 1.
- The New Ambassadors Revue, Ambassadors.

TUESDAY, July 15th—
- Circle of International Art Concert, Purcell and Bach Programme. Also recitals on July 16th and 17th, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, 6.30.
- Cdr. E. P. Young: "China in Relation to the Present Situation," 2 Keats Grove, 8.30.

WEDNESDAY, July 16th—
- Madame Ambrosova: "Czech Songs and Music," Czechoslovak Inst., 18 Grosvenor Place, 6.
- Harold Clay: "Post-War Tasks for Trade Unionism," Conway Hall, 7.
- Alick West: "Surrealism and Other Modern Styles," 9 Gt. Newport Street, 7.

FRIDAY, July 18th—
- R. Sorensen: "India To-day," 12 Gt. Newport Street, 7.30.

Correspondence

LETTER TO AN ENGINEER.

SIR,—You give the engineers an elaborate scheme what to do to improve the existing system. No engineer will be impressed by it for, our trade being closely connected with geometry, we know that the squaring of the circle is impossible. Capitalism is based on profit and only on profit, and war is the biggest chance to make gigantic profits. Capitalism will not miss it whatever you do; yet total war, particularly in a besieged fortress, is incompatible with profit.

Consider what has happened in the past months of this war. The muddle has been increasing steadily. Attempts for planning resulted in deepening disintegration of production. Sensible and decent men have tried, in the newspapers and in Parliament, everything possible to improve matters. The result was in the negative. Capitalism is checking any scheme which aims at anything else than increasing profits, yet in this total war any scheme that aims at winning the war is bound to check profits. And if Capitalism accepts, exceptionally, some useful scheme, you can be sure it will soon be turned into a scheme of making higher profits. Here is a striking example: the idea the factories should work for the Government on a commission base is a sound one, no doubt. Yet what is happening actually? Factories are increasing their production costs artificially in order to increase the amount of commissions. They maintain enormous overhead charges, oblige workers to work unnecessary overtime, let them stand idle for hours, in a

word, they do their best to check production. The other day I learned that one big London factory employs engineers for night work, thirteen hours a night (officially with 1½ hours of break), six nights a week. I was puzzled not because the scheme is inhuman but because I thought that no sensible manager could expect any reasonable result from it. Then I learned what is going on actually in that factory. The men sleep for three hours or more and during the rest of the time the work being done is next to nil. They earn £8 10s. for nothing; but Capitalism does not mind paying high wages for nothing—out of public funds, extracting, in addition, 2s. for every pound of wages for shareholders. Another reason for that night work scheme is, as workers of the factory told me, that by "using" the whole plant 24 hours a day, the establishment is able to prevent the transfer of machines, under the industrial concentration scheme, to other factories.

No, Sir, you will never achieve war efficiency amidst the existing economic system, just as you will never succeed in squaring the circle—or, if you choose you can also take a simile from biology: every part of the human organism can only react in its specific way; the eye can see only and the ear can hear only. So Capitalism can react in its specific way only. It can never act anything else than profit, profit, profit.

You might point to the fact that Nazi Germany is efficiently waging a total war without having abolished Capitalism. Yet, Nazi Capitalism has its hundreds of millions of slaves in the conquered countries. War production under such conditions can still gratify the most extravagant greediness without interfering with the war effort.

There is no means to secure England's survival but Socialism—Socialism in its true meaning, nationalisation of the means of production and not some scheme of family allowances, old age pensions and income tax—and Socialism *now* and not after the war, for under Capitalist rule there will be no "after the war" at all for England.

London, N.W. ENGINEER

SIR,—I congratulate THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION on the quality of the debate that has been carried on by articles and correspondence recently. It might be considered worthy of the school of Socrates, but what is a plain man to get out of it? Would not Socrates say at this stage that the time has come to sum up on the brilliant display of dialectics with the object of finding out whether there are any results which show the disputants to have become agreed on any one point? I suggest that you should now assume the mantle of Socrates and put the questions, and I would suggest that the questions should be taken from T. Balogh's last letter, as follows:

Do we all agree that the means of production should be put unreservedly at the disposal of the State? and

Do we all agree that such a procedure would speed up the coming victory?

I am the captain of a thousand munition workers and on the governing staff of a further 10,000. I warn you that Balogh is right when he infers that the "spirit of last summer" no longer prevails in many war factories, and that you must do something to recapture it. JOHN HEALEY

Ulverscroft Grange, Markfield.

THE FINNS

SIR,—The Russian news has brought the usual spate of letters from Mr. Shaw and the "near Communists." They seem to have endless leisure to discuss their political gyrations. On one point I feel some reply is needed.

Most of your readers were pro-Finnish during last year's war, and must be saddened by a sequence of events which has brought the Finns into the war on the side of our enemies. Nothing, however, has happened to prove that our attitude at that time was wrong. Those who were correspondents in Finland during the war will especially resent the suggestion that we misled the public, or "were barking up the wrong tree." I knew most of my colleagues, and on the main facts nearly all of us were agreed.

We all admired the manner in which the Finns organised themselves for a war forced upon them by a country with eighty times their population. We recognised the extremely high level of their education, their fundamental decency and selfless patriotism. We knew that Finland must be overwhelmed by the weight of numbers and of armaments unless reinforced from outside. In stressing the bravery and skill of the Finnish soldiers we reported what was evident. We also noted, quite correctly, that the Russian expeditions north of Lake Ladoga were badly organised, and that the first troops sent into action were of a very poor type.

When the Russians finally used better troops, and began a large-scale attack south of Lake Ladoga, it soon became clear that only substantial reinforcements of men, materials and, above all, of an air force, could possibly enable the Finns to hold out. Whether their strategy was good or bad was hardly relevant. An elementary knowledge of war was enough to show that the series of strong points, known as the Mannerheim Line, could be easily turned when all the waterways and lakes were frozen solid. A visit to that front showed that Finland, although she collected an extraordinarily high proportion of her population into her army, could not supply the reserves necessary even to prolong the struggle. From abroad came no real help. The only troops who arrived were some 6,000 Swedish volunteers, very few of whom went into action, and a few hundred volunteers from the Baltic States.

Those who held that the attack on Finland and the annexation of the Baltic States were blunders as well as crimes have been amply justified in the last fortnight. The only excuse for either action was that they were measures of defence against Germany. Latvia and Lithuania have not held out for a week. They have, with their disgruntled populations, proved a useful jumping-off place for the Germans. Russia's strategic gains in Finland show no likelihood of off-setting the addition to the German forces of a small but resolute army animated, not by any fondness for a political theory, but by an intense and disinterested patriotism which transcends anything of its kind I have ever come across elsewhere.

I know no one who wrote about the Finnish war who did not recognise the bravery and stubbornness of the Russian troops, and the comparative efficiency with which the southern campaign was carried through. Naturally, everyone in England hopes and prays that this stubbornness, combined with the tenacity of the people, and the huge size of the country, will lead to the German army "ditching itself" somewhere in Russia. I see, however, no reason why our anxiety for the success of new allies should lead us to falsify history or alter opinions honestly formed. G. T. G.

FAMILY ALLOWANCES

SIR,—I was interested in your paragraph about the wages of agricultural labourers and think the proposed family allowance scheme an excellent idea.

My husband gets the minimum wage and pays the standard rent for a modern farm cottage. We can live comfortably on the remainder, with the addition of the money I earn by "occasional work" on the farm. On the other hand, the mother of young children, whose expenses are consequently much higher, is necessarily prevented from "working out," and is obviously in difficulty with only the one small wage coming in—and this poverty often leads to apathy with regard to cleanliness, etc.

The introduction of family allowances should, therefore, remedy to a large extent this inequality between the childless couple, who are still all right as things are at present, and those with several small children, who are desperately in need of more money to give them a chance. EILEEN LEWIS

Milton Cottage,
Milton, Kirkcudbright.

THE VANISHING TRICK

SIR,—Replying to Elizabeth Reed's letter of last week, the "vanishing trick" is not so sinister as she would make out.

The shortage of onions is due to the fact that a very great percentage of supplies, probably 80 to 90 per cent. came from Holland, Egypt and Spain pre-war. *Re* tomatoes, 80 per cent. of May and June supplies were from Guernsey, Holland and the Canary Islands, 70 per cent. of September supplies from Jersey and Holland. *Re* new potatoes, 90 per cent. May/June supplies were from Spain and Jersey. As the price of gooseberries is fixed, growers are leaving them to grow bigger. They wouldn't be human if they didn't. There will be very little soft fruit, because: (*a*) the weather is too dry; (*b*) the strawberry lands are producing other crops, such as potatoes and corn; (*c*) imports are forbidden.

In conclusion, no amount of price fixing will increase the available supplies, but it does increase the demand. It is a hard fact, but there are not sufficient of these commodities to go round.

A GREENGROCER

OPEN-AIR SHAKESPEARE

SIR,—C.E.M.A. and the Bermondsey Shelter Council, who made possible the season of open-air Shakespeare in Southwark Park, are naturally grateful for your critic's favourable notice of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Had he hated the performance, his judgment would be regretted, but not disputed.

He has, however, raised the whole question of framing and housing open-air drama, and that necessarily raises the question of costs. He objects to the creation of an auditorium by making an enclosure under the trees, and prefers the idea of a bandstand open to all.

But drama is not the same as band music. It needs containment for its effect. The Greeks realised that when they constructed their arenas with magnificent acoustics cut into the side of a hill; and some of the Scandinavian theatres, to which your critic alludes, are very well situated in quarries. The Tudor theatres on the Bankside, of whose stage Mr. Atkins' is a rough model, were fully enclosed. If the open method were accepted and people stood about on the verge until they had made up their minds to spend 6*d*. on a seat there would be a fidgety crowd, taking places up during the play and generally disturbing the actors, whose task of communicating poetry and humour to an audience is quite different from that of putting wind into wood and brass. Obviously an actor can be much more easily distracted than a musician who has to keep his eye on his music and his conductor. Next week *Twelfth Night* will be played, a piece containing some of the subtlest and loveliest of Shakespeare's lines. Viola and Orsino deserve all the quiet they can get.

Finally, there is the matter of cost. Such performances, with arrangement of stage, hire of costumes and payment of moderate salaries, are bound to be uneconomical, even if crowded, at the prices now being charged (2s. to 6*d*.). In the case of open-air drama the risk of wet weather, which may totally abolish receipts while the costs run on, has also to be considered. C.E.M.A. and the Bermondsey Shelter Council are helping as far as they can with financial guarantees, but were they to encourage Mr. Atkins to present his Shakespeare as an open bandstand "free-for-all" with some rows of seats at 6*d*. or 1s., the work would certainly have to stop far sooner. A body like C.E.M.A., which is working for the widest dispersion of the Fine Arts, has continually to consider this question of price, and one thing seems to be definitely proven, namely, that giving such things away or making them extremely cheap is not the best way to commend them. The public, especially to-day, when spending power is widely spread, does not want art thrown to it as charity, and often in our drama tours in industrial areas we have discovered that the cheapest seats are the least well attended. The pricing of assisted art is a very complex matter, but the problem is certainly not solved by going out for cheapness all the time. IVOR BROWN

Council for the Encouragement
of Music and the Arts.

INDIAN DEADLOCK

SIR,—I have read Sir John Maynard's reply to my letter in your issue of the 4th, as also his article in a monthly journal in which he is necessarily more communicative, but with due respect to him and his co-author of the article the pontoon bridge he proposes to set up will be washed away by the force of the Nationalist current in the country which will never tolerate any service member in the Central Executive, still less endure continuance of ultimate power in the Secretary of State for India.

The minimum that moderate opinion in India will accept is the complete Indianisation of the Centre by really representative men who should be armed with statutory power or delegated authority to govern the country—nothing less and nothing else will satisfy it. HARI SINGH GOUR

8 Royal Avenue,
Chelsea, London, S.W.3.

A.R.P. IN U.S.S.R.

SIR,—As an enthusiastic Communist I have hitherto been trying to excite indignation against our Capitalist Government for not having constructed deep shelters. I now learn that there are no deep shelters in any Soviet city. Will you advise me whether I ought to continue my campaign against the British Government's negligence?

67 Brenda Way, J. WILSON
Welwyn Garden City.

ERSATZ

SIR,—A letter signed "William E. Dick," in your issue of June 21st, must give a quite misleading idea of the article on the German Ersatz industry, which appeared in the issue of *Picture Post* dated March 30th, 1940.

Mr. Dick quotes this article as an example of "Derision of modern ersatz," which "was a part of the pre-war era of appeasement and wishfulfilment."

Nobody would guess from this that the article in question was called: "Can Nazi Ersatz Win?" That it was introduced with the words:—

> "Our leaders must not underestimate German skill and effort in developing substitutes. 'Ersatz' with us is a joke. But 'Ersatz' supplies 45 per cent. of Germany's peacetime oil needs. It has other imposing achievements to its credit."

Or that in the course of a long article, setting out the immense achievements of the German ersatz industries, the words quoted by Mr. Dick were the only ones which could in any sense be regarded as a criticism, or marking a limit to these achievements.

Even this general statement that when the military deadlock ends, German subsidiary industries would be outweighed by the demands of war, can surely be supported by a consideration of Germany's campaigns and aggressions since that date, and the reasons which led her to make them.

If ersatz oil had been sufficient to defeat Britain, there need have been no drive to get control of Rumania, and no immediate invasion of Russia. It is not belittling ersatz industries to say that Germany's war-machine could never run all-out for any length of time on ersatz industries alone.

It is perhaps worth adding that at the time this article appeared it and *Picture Post* were very generally attacked on the grounds that the article was "pro-German" in tone, and rated the achievements of the Nazi ersatz industry much too highly.

Picture Post, TOM HOPKINSON,
43-44 Shoe Lane, Editor.
London, E.C.4.

MR. W. H. BRÜMMER

SIR,—My husband is a refugee from Offenbach-am-Main, and his application for release from internment is about to be considered by the Tribunal appointed by the Home Office. I have been asked to supply names of persons who knew my husband in Germany, but I know of no refugees in England, for those we did know are scattered elsewhere in Europe. I am wondering if there are any refugee readers of your paper from Offenbach or Frankfurt-am-Main who might have been acquainted with my husband; and if they would be willing to communicate with me.

He was a prominent member and champion player of the Offenbacher *Arbeiter Schachklub* and conducted a chess corner in the Social Democrat paper *Offenbacher Abendblatt*. His name is W. H. Brümmer.

FLORENCE L. D. BRÜMMER
12 Sutton Street,
Flore, Northants.

RILKE

SIR,—As a friend of Rilke I feel compelled to reply to the essay of Mr. Sackville West in the number of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, June 14th.

Rilke was my friend from 1904 until his death in 1926. Though our friendship was not nearly as intimate as many of his innumerable ones in later years, there was a simple element of mutual confidence and help in it. I knew Lou Andreas-Salomé—who was a rare and great woman, but not at all "mysterious," and I became acquainted with Frau Wunderly-Volkhart—so I may say, that Rilke's relation to both differed utterly one from another. I know Rilke's wife and daughter and I may add that Mr. Sackville West's exposition of Rilke's relationship to women shows neither information nor understanding.

Knowing Rilke's economic conditions throughout his life I may say that, notwithstanding the generosity of his publisher, the unworthy strain under which he lived in Paris and Munich was only definitely relieved by his friends in Switzerland. Thus he lived only from 1919 until 1926 without financial cares—and not, as Mr. Sackville West said, "nearly half his life, if not more, in conditions of comfort, at other people's expense." His "castle" in Muzot, which he chose himself, was an ancient and very primitive tower, run by a Swiss housekeeper without any servants, not "the castle, the servants and the complacent hostess," an existence which he appreciated very much on occasions, but which would never have appealed to him as a permanency.

The whole interpretation Mr. Sackville West gives to Rilke's personal life seems to be misleading in a similar way. If perhaps it is difficult to judge these things as an outsider there is one instance where a document proves Mr. Sackville West's misinterpretation. Rilke's letters to Rodin (complete and informative *only* in the French edition of the *Insel Verlag*, 1928) would show him that generosity and nobility in this friendship was wholly on Rilke's side and that Rodin had not even the "Latin savoir faire," which Mr. Sackville West admires. After the rupture of 1906 it was Rodin who again approached Rilke eighteen months later and the friendship lasted until the war.

Regarding the "Songs of War" which Rilke wrote in the first days of August, 1914, Mr. Sackville West alleges Rilke not to have had "taste and self-knowledge enough not to sound a clarion-call to arms" as he did not want "to practise what he preaches." From these five songs only the two first, written in three days, could be interpreted at all as a clarion-call to arms. Prof. Leishman says in his commentary (*Later Poems*, The Hogarth Press) "already in the third song it (the enthusiastic mood) is shattered (most deplorably in the opinion of certain patriots) by a "vast interrogation," and the last one "transcends all languages and all frontiers." Rilke reproached himself so much with his momentary enthusiasm that he excluded these songs from the complete edition of his works.

Perhaps the objections Mr. Sackville West has against the "volubility" and irrelevance of many of Rilke's letters would be modified if he considered that the selection was made from the point of view of what the present authorities in Germany would find tolerable. The Rilke Archiv omitted letters published before 1933 in the newest editions. If it is a trend in Germany of to-day to represent Rilke as harmless, it seems still the more important to let him be recognised in his deep internationalism, and his pure and earnest humanity.

Llanelltyd, (MRS.) EVA CASSIRER
Dolgelley, Merionethshire.

RELIGION AND RUSSIA

SIR,—I am sorry that you should describe the idea that religion is suppressed in Russia as a "delusion" in the same issue in which Prof. Laski draws attention to the real seriousness of this problem for the relations of the Soviet and the Western Democracies.

The plain fact is that the churches in Russia can hold services of prayer and have some sermons about individual private devotion preached, but they are rigidly prevented from doing anything else whatever, by law.

Publication of books and articles in a religious sense, or even of Bibles and Books of Prayer, is absolutely impossible. Nothing "idealistic" in the Soviet sense of the word can get into print.

Religious societies cannot have any club or social activities in connection with them or arrange lectures. Religious education of more than three young people at once, unless at home, is an offence. While religious propaganda is thus repressed, anti-religious propaganda is a State and Party activity.

Russian Christians all over the world, in all kind of forces, are fighting Hitler. Only a section of them are in Hitler's pay. Those inside Russia are also fighting Hitler, as well as they can under the above restrictions. Can their friends, the British democrats, help to get them some freedom of action?

C/o Lloyd's Bank, EDWARD EVERY
Lincoln.

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JARROLDS LONDON

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

In an age of inordinate lying, when lying has gone beyond the refinements of art and has become one of the great invisible exports in every state, it is a pleasure to remember that the ancestral and proverbial founder of the modern industry was a German. It is a pleasure which inquiry increases : he was a German who told his best lies about Russia. For it was during his Russian travels that Baron von Münchausen shot a cherry-stone into a stag's antlers so that the animal grew a tree out of its head. In Russia he grew a beanstalk to the moon, preserved the trill of an opera singer in spirits, and had his many defenceless encounters with savage animals. (There was, he admitted, "a kind of fatality" in the way he was always unarmed when he met these beasts. The idea of fate appears to be necessary to the German outlook.) The Baron was fated to be fabulous whether he was driving a harnessed wolf into Petersburg or thrusting his arm down the gullet of another wolf until he reached its tail and turned the animal inside out like a glove. As we swallow our doses of German destiny to-day and switch off our Haw-Haw, the figure of their great Hanoverian ancestor comes suggestively to the mind. For a hundred and fifty years the Baron has been the King of European liars.

An instructive introduction to Baron von Münchausen was written some years ago by Prof. Wm. Rose in his book *Men, Myths and Movements in German Literature* (Allen and Unwin). The Baron was no Nordic myth. He was a real cavalry officer who served in the Russian army and after fighting the Turks in 1740; retired to his estate and became notorious in his own countryside for his tall stories of travel and the chase. At one time he must have entertained an author unknowingly, for a number of the tales got into a Berlin periodical. These were seized by a scholar and rogue called Raspe, a man as remarkable in his own way as the Baron, who made a continuous narrative of the tales, but who, being wanted by the German police for theft, did not publish them until he had escaped to England. Thus the first edition of Münchausen is in English. An interesting and characteristic dualism enters the Münchausen travels at this point. The huge success of the book tempted a number of English satirical writers who added chapter after chapter to the succeeding editions. The break between German lying and English lying is plain. We were unable to reach those poetic heights of pure mendacity reached by the Hanoverian squire but, encumbered perhaps by the moral sense of our eighteenth century, were reduced to topical satire. The later chapters of Münchausen are like Swift or Fielding watered down, or Rowlandson bludgeoning a point, a cautionary example of our aptitude for missing the spirit of foreign authors. The fabulous has given place to the tendencious. Nowadays we put the book down after six or seven chapters, rather bored and wondering what the Baron thought of his unsought fame. This is known. A visitor who went to see the once cheerful and tankard-beating hunter in his old age found him irritable and suspicious. His betrayal in print had silenced him.

The career of Raspe the betrayer was more animated. Throughout his life he combined scholarship and crime. Employed by the Landgrave of Hesse to collect coins and antiquities he stole a part of the collection. This caused his flight to England. He lay low for some time as a mineralogist in the Cornish mines, but moving up to Scotland later on, his ingenuity broke out again. He made a faked discovery of minerals by the simple method of planting the minerals on the spot. The writings of Raspe were diverse, for in addition to his papers written for learned societies (he was at one time a fellow of the Royal Society and was unfrocked for his crimes), he wrote a poetic romance of the days of chivalry.

But to return to the Baron. The difference between Münchausen and those who, hearing a lie, could not help adding to it, was, as I have said, one of kind. Münchausen's originality as a liar was that he was a humorous and fabulous liar who aimed at not being believed. He lied for lying's sake, beautifully, lyrically and irresponsibly. His invention was like a child's. He is always as surprised as the reader and there is a wild, triumphant logic in his stories. It is *possible* that after spending a night in the snow and waking up to find the snow melted, he should see his horse hanging from a weathercock where he had unwittingly tied the animal. Fancy approves of the fur coat that went mad after being bitten by a raging dog. And who would not desire to preserve one of the trills of an opera singer, in spirits? Who was it, indeed, who travelled Europe with a lady's larynx? Münchausen's lies are fairy tales and, as Professor Rose says, many of them can be traced to European folklore. The beanstalk which reaches the moon is an obvious instance. There is in German literature a tradition of mendacious or absurd stories. There are the stories of the people of Schilda, celebrated for their childish stupidities, and there is the legend of the Schlaraffenland where roast pigs run about asking people to eat them, and where the man who tells the biggest lie is king. English folklore is not as rich as the German is in these creamy delicacies, though we have our Edward Lear and our Lilliput whose ancestry is probably Teutonic. If Lear had added chapters to Münchausen *he* might have followed the gay original vein, but our nonsense is more nervous and more fey; it has not that solid confectioner's touch, the obese drollery and butcher's shop horror of the German. The Lilliput phase of English fantasy was satirical, not poetic, in its impulse. Swift was careful to give a scientific air to *Gulliver's Travels*, Defoe had chapter and verse for his exploding island, and in the Moroccan chapters of *Jonathan Wild* Fielding engaged in a little polished horseplay at the expense of the literature of travel when he made fun of the Phoenix and described an intrepid English seaman marching down the throat of a dragon in order to shoot it in the heart.

We should be grateful that the honour of producing the King of Liars is not ours. It is an honour which would inevitably go to a myth-making people, to a race whose very scholarship and philosophy recognise no bounds of proportion. But this characteristic of the Germans does seem to indicate one thing : that when we try to persuade them, we should be careful to add a really Teutonic dose of mystification to our words. The success of Shaw in Germany is probably due to the Shavian mystification ; it seems necessary to set a myth-maker to catch a myth-maker.

From Münchausen the mind naturally drifts on to the subject of the great liars and frauds of other nations and especially to those people who impose a totally false personality. The Münchausen type has been commonest among travellers. Psalmanaazaar, Peary, de Rougemont —one can think of many who saw how much fame could be obtained at very little cost, merely by *saying* one had been to a remote place. The so-called George Psalmanaazaar is an astonishingly precocious example of the lying traveller. A native of Languedoc and springing indeed from a province famous for its tall stories, Psalmanaazaar had successfully palmed himself off as a Japanese on the military and clerical authorities in Liège long before he was twenty. The Protestants and Catholics vied with each other for the honour of his conversion. Finally an unscrupulous Protestant clergyman who had suspected Psalmanaazaar's truthfulness went into a kind of tacit, blackmailing partnership with him. The youth went to England, translated the Church Catechism into bogus Japanese for the Bishop of London, and eventually concocted a faked history of the island of Formosa. For this he had to invent an enormous amount of detail : population figures, a religion, a calendar, not to mention ceremonies, political structure and customs. And of course there was always his imaginary language.

Psalmanaazaar had a life of notoriety until he was thirty and then suddenly confessed. His *Memoirs*, an embarrassingly remorseful work, contains a not uninteresting and candid account of his frauds ; and incidentally is rather a good portrait of adolescent presumptuousness. What started him on this curious career? The Gascon tradition? His divided home and his spoiling by the priests? The decisive incident seems to have occurred when, at the age of 16, he was employed as a tutor in a family. The mother of his pupil was amorous. The tutor was cold, scared and full of youthful arrogance and timid self-interest. He turned the lady down and was at once dismissed. This injustice might have been forgotten in a day or two by simpler young men ; but there was nothing simple about Psalmanaazaar. He was too vain and suspicious not to ascribe complex motives to other people. He conceived the useful idea that the family were secret Protestants, and that he was the victim of religious persecution, and he at once took to the roads, dressed in a pilgrim's rags and traded profitably on his misfortunes. The good, as he admits with sorrow in his *Memoirs*, are far more credulous than the wicked.

General ignorance of the Orient was a great help to Psalmanaazaar, but he did not have complete success with his claims. His Japanese language was the subject of much scepticism, even though he ostentatiously wrote from right to left. His complexion puzzled the scientists ; but he told them that there were two kinds of men in the tropics : the dark who worked in the sun and the fair who worked in the shade. Psalmanaazaar had a quick mind and was an adroit psychologist ; he saw that the pious had a vested interest in his myth and would go to any lengths to confirm it, and that all he had to do was to keep the dispute between his disciples and opponents going. Nothing (this early propagandist said) kept people from the truth better than a continuous procession of red herrings. He never gave way on any lie ; on the contrary, if it was disputed, he added to it. The interest of his self-portrait is that it shows how much of fright there was mixed in with his conceit and also, even after his conversion, how powerful his original kink was. To the end he refused to give his real name.

Psalmanaazaar had not completely the criminal mind, but he had the criminal's passion for cutting a figure. He was undoubtedly very gifted. To have invented a Japan, a Japanese language, grammar, religion, calendar, customs and hosts of figures, to be prepared to maintain and debate them with the learned, was a feat for a boy under twenty years of age ; and to be undismayed by exposure and, in fact, to use it and exploit it until no one knew where they were with him, was an advanced Shavian performance. In later years he appears to have got control of his devil and to have found in serious scholarship, under people who recognised his real merits, a respectable way of life. "I never sought much after anybody," Dr. Johnson said, "But I sought after George Psalmanaazaar the most. I used to go out and sit with him at an alehouse in the city." For Johnson firmly believed in his virtue and conversion ; and if this was genuine, Psalmanaazaar's story is a curious example of an inferiority complex resolved at last. V. S. PRITCHETT

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Easily the most popular travel book of the Spring is I WENT TO TRISTAN by Allan B. Crawford. There are very big repeats from the libraries each week. There is something, of course, strangely fascinating about the Island of Tristan da Cunha, and *The Times* is most enthusiastic about Crawford's book. Beautifully illustrated. 18/- net.

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Many of the half-crown Black Jackets are having a very big sale. The latest addition is LIBYAN SANDS by Major Bagnold. You want to be sure to get hold of this book now that it is available at so popular a price. It is most interesting, brilliantly written and of particular value now.

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As for AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION (Parts I, II and III are available and Part IV is coming along) the sales are—appropriately—astronomical. These are Temple Press Books, also published by the English Universities Press. 2/- net each.

The pleasant surprises among the Spring novelists have been Susan Scarlett, with THE MAN IN DARKNESS, and Stella Morton with SHADOW OF WINGS. Both have new books soon, Susan Scarlett's BABBACOMBES is now ready. 8/3 net each.

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These will join—and others will follow—with the books that have become the literature of the war; Sir Nevile Henderson's FAILURE OF A MISSION; Dr. Van Kleffens' THE RAPE OF THE NETHERLANDS; C. J. Hambro's I SAW IT HAPPEN IN NORWAY; Taffrail's THE NAVY IN ACTION; J. S. M. Simpson's SOUTH AFRICA FIGHTS; Collie Knox's HEROES ALL; Arthur Mee's 1940; Elie J. Bois' TRUTH ON THE TRAGEDY OF FRANCE; C. M. Franzero's INSIDE ITALY.

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Selected Poems of Robert Bridges. *Faber.* 2s. 6d.

The Ship of Death. By D. H. LAWRENCE. *Faber.* 2s. 6d.

Translations from Leopardi. By R. C. TREVELYAN. *Cambridge.* 3s. 6d.

Veterans and Other Poems. By DONAGH MACDONAGH. *Cuala Press.* 11s. 6d.

North Star and Other Poems. By LAURENCE BINYON. *Macmillan.* 4s.

Make Bright the Arrows. By EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY. *Hamish Hamilton.* 6s.

Youth in the Skies. By HERBERT ASQUITH. *Sidgwick and Jackson.* 5s.

Every controversy about contemporary poetry at any period in history centres round questions of idiom. A new manner of putting words together introduces a literary revolution. The young writers eagerly embrace the new manner, the older writers eschew and denounce it. Bitter as the controversy is, it offers noble consolation for the less gifted on both sides. For the old, to write in the manner of the classics is to take up wordy arms against iconoclasts. The use of archaic forms becomes a virtue in itself. "Of course," says the poet of the older generation to his nephew at Oxford, "you don't care for my old-fashioned stuff." And at that moment the old man sees himself in the mantle of Shakespeare and Milton, whilst the flush on the young man's cheek is that of Rimbaud.

Yet take up half a dozen volumes, such as those now before me, by writers of opposing schools, and you see how little able an idiom is in itself to make or unmake a writer:

(1) See how the ships glide in round the bend of the cliff,
Ships from the coral isles, white glistening hulls,
That have rounded the curve of the world: those queens of the sea
Have come to their haven at last with their trail of snow-white gulls.

(2) Wanton with long delay the gay spring leaping cometh;
The blackthorn starreth now his bough on the eve of May:
All day in the sweet box-tree the bee for pleasure hummeth:
The cuckoo sends afloat his note on the air all day.

(3) Strict hairshirt of circumstance tears the flesh
Off most delicate bones;
Years of counter and office, the warped mesh
Of social living, dropping on stones,
Wear down all that was rough and worthy
To a common denominator of dull tones.

The first of these is by Herbert Asquith, the second by Robert Bridges, and the third by Donagh MacDonagh. The first two are in much the same idiom, which has been labelled Georgian. The third is obviously "modern." Yet how infinitely superior the second is to the other two. The distinction is that the writer has his eye on the object, and although one may like or dislike the idiom (personally I do not care for it), the poetry transcends it. The lines by Herbert Asquith, on the other hand, are simply an exercise in an idiom. It is true that ships do "glide," that hulls "glisten," that ships have been happily named "queens of the sea," and that gulls are "snow-white" and follow in the wake of ships. Yet there is nothing in these literary observations to awaken in the reader the sense that he is seeing a ship for the first time, or is in contact with a mind which has something to say. The one word "afloat" in the lines of Bridges makes us aware of the cuckoo's song drifting on the air of an early summer day as though we had heard it for the first time.

As for Mr. Macdonagh's lines, I like their idiom. He also has, as a reading of his poems shows, something to say. Yet he often falls into exactly the traps of the Georgian writers, a certain turgidity, the conventional use of a contemporary manner, an uncertain eye on the object. The roughness of the contemporary idiom tends to make one accept what he says on trust, yet reading his lines carefully one may wonder whether the "counter and office" which "wear down all that was rough and worthy" can be correctly compared to anything so religiously ascetic and ordered as a "strict hairshirt of circumstance." Bridges would never have used the word "most" as ambiguously and vaguely as in the line "Off most delicate bones" where "most" might either mean the superlative or convey the sense of "the majority of delicate bones."

However, MacDonagh is a poet well worth following, who writes with a strength which the Irish still possess in their literature in far greater richness than the English or Americans.

Laurence Binyon is another poet in the Georgian idiom; he has never received the full degree of recognition which he deserves. The reason may be that his persistent high-mindedness puts too great a strain on most readers. The world that is exhorted to be "nobler for her sake," not being nobler, may feel not fit to read Binyon's poems. I am inclined to think that too great an insistence on good taste, noble sentiments, the impalpable and the entirely unvulgar, may amount to a lack of the sense of life which itself often produces a kind of spiritual vulgarity, which is seen at its worst in the suburban liking for "the refined."

This failing is shown at its worst in Mr. Binyon's poem for verse-speaking called "Shelley's Pyre." Here he dwells exclusively on what is ethereal and spiritual in Shelley; and the result is an orgy of quivering exaltation and uplift. Fortunately there are a few moments when Mr. Binyon is hauled down to earth; one of these seems to have been during an illness, and the resulting poem written in hospital is very fine indeed and compares well with Harold Monro's remarkable poem "Bitter Sanctuary."

D. H. Lawrence once said that the Georgian poets were like engines blowing off steam at half-pressure. His own poems are not written in the Georgian manner, or in a modern idiom, for that matter, either. They are the products of a writer obsessed with his own personality, convinced of the world-shaking significance of his amorous experiences, and with a prophet's message of salvation. A prophetic gift does not need the aid of a verse-technique to invoke an object; it can feed on simple undisciplined inspiration. Lawrence's poems are not poems at all in any definable sense, they are raw outpourings of poetic thought. As such, they are extremely successful. He really *creates* for us the animals, experiences, passions, of his writing. Occasionally we are let down by a rhyme or ragged ending, but his world is complete enough to carry us with it in the best of the poems about Birds, Beasts and Flowers. His chief defect is that owing to his lack of any conscious artistic aim, he is too tied to the literal in interpreting his experiences. This, far more than the lack of technique, makes his poems inconclusive and unsatisfactory. For example, *The Ship of Death* is a long poem in ten sections describing the journey to death of a dying man. The poem is a superb and courageous act of acceptance. Yet Lawrence spoils it at the end, because he suddenly remembers that perhaps he is not going to die after all, so the magnificent imaginative journey to death is abruptly broken off and the ship made to come back again. Gifted with a powerful imagination, Lawrence could never even in his art completely put his trust in it, so his writing is full of anti-climax. This prevented him from ever writing a masterpiece; but he himself would have replied that he was not interested in writing masterpieces, or putting "finis" to experiences which had no end, and I prefer this attitude to Binyon's insistence on the starry heights.

Miss Millay's book is a Bouquet of White Feathers for American Isolationists. The sentiments are useful, the poetry deplorable.

Leopardi was the great poet of modern despair. His poetry raises extraordinary problems, because while its view of life is one-sided, narrow, based on bitter personal disappointments, and pessimistic to the point of a ludicrousness greater even than that of Hardy's pessimism, he was undoubtedly a great poet, and his poems have a fascination which is almost incomparable. *In Memoriam* is the only poetry I can think of apart from Leopardi which combines utter despair and black pessimism with the delights of a poetic feast. Mr. Trevelyan has translated some of the Canti into unrhyming English verse. Read as English poems they give one some of the feeling of the original. If one uses them as a crib, which—to my mind—is the way all translations should be used, they are a great help to the understanding of Leopardi, unless one is a good enough scholar to need no crib.

New Poems, 1940, is an interesting and inclusive anthology of work by leading poets in England and America. It contains good poems by Auden, Barker, Marianne Moore, Prokosch, etc., and gives one a very good idea that poetry has by no means been killed by the war. The fact is that the war has not produced much war poetry, but that it has stimulated the poets by releasing them from the necessity of being Jeremiahs, since all their prophecies of the last ten years have come true. They can now devote their minds, if not their bodies—paradoxical as it may seem—to poetry. STEPHEN SPENDER

THE RED ARMY

The Red Army Moves. By GEOFFREY COX. *Gollancz.* 16s.

Until a few days ago there had been few opportunities for appraising the quality of the Red Army. There had been fighting in the Far East, in which the Russians had done well, and there had been unresisted, or almost unresisted, military occupations which, it was rumoured, had been mismanaged. The Finnish War was the only real sample from which one could judge, and here, so it seemed, there was a degree of incompetence reminiscent of the Imperial Army at its worst. This book corrects, but does not altogether efface that impression. It is, I think, the first conscientious and impartial assessment of the blunders and achievements of the Red Army in the Finnish War, and is therefore of immense actual interest. But the book's value does not consist merely in its power to provide information on a point which should soon be clearly decided. There is a permanent interest in this extremely competent account of an astonishing campaign.

The initial mistakes of the Russian High Command were not dissimilar from those of the British before the Boer War. The enemy's power and will to resist were hopelessly underestimated, no allowance was made for peculiar difficulties of climate and terrain, the invading army was equipped rather for a peaceful occupation than for a sustained conflict, it was itself of poor quality and it was sent forward on a long front with inadequate lines of supply to meet resolute and intelligently trained men holding carefully prepared positions.

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first-class military talent. The result was not unlike that of December, 1899, and the hysterical joy of the European press on that occasion was also paralleled by the allied press on this.

It was not until the failure of the Northern campaign had become apparent and the Soviets had decided to force the so-called Mannerheim Line that first-class units of the Red Army were used in important quantities. Up till that point the mistakes were primarily mistakes of grand strategy; the armies which were defeated in the North might, of course, have put up a much better show, but they should never have been sent in the first place. The forcing of the Isthmus was inevitably a long and costly undertaking, but it was adroitly managed and the Russian strength in numbers was intelligently exploited, not only through the operation of a ceaselessly renewed attack, which, incidentally, demanded and received very good staff work, but also by a turning movement across the ice of the Gulf of Finland which extended the already tenuous Finnish line to breaking point. In this operation a fairly high standard was shown both tactically and strategically, but it cannot be said that the Red Army was up to German standards.

Undoubtedly in the second half of the war the Red Army showed that it was capable of learning from its mistakes and applying the lessons swiftly. Mr. Cox, while admitting its shortcomings points out that it was never intended to fight such a war as this, the war for which it has been trained is the war that it is now fighting, and here he thinks an undoubted inferiority in quality may be offset by quantity both human and mechanical. It must, however, be pointed out that this was the belief of the German Air Force in August last year.

Most Soviet enterprises begin with high hopes and tremendous confidence, then there is usually a period of mounting difficulties, delays, and disasters, finally corrections are made, enthusiasm is tempered with discretion and the situation is more or less re-established. The Finnish expedition ran true to form. Like the Boer War, it gave opportunities for experiment on the part of the aggressor and he was able to learn by his mistakes. War against Germany is a different proposition and one fears that mistakes may be made the consequences of which will be ineluctable and immeasurable. On the other hand, prophecies about Russia, especially Soviet Russia, have a way of being proved wrong. One hopes that the words of a hostile critic may again be verified and that "The U.S.S.R. has not ceased to instruct and to astonish us."

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WAS MILTON A UNITARIAN?

The Religious Opinions of Milton, Locke and Newton. By H. McLACHLAN. *Manchester University Press.* 7s. 6d.

This book contains an extremely conscientious inquiry from the Unitarian point of view of the religious opinions of Milton, Locke and Newton. The conclusion, as far as Milton is concerned, is as follows:

> To sum up in brief: It is clear that Milton's religious opinions cannot be stated in terms acceptable to any single Nonconformist Church.

I find myself entirely in agreement with this statement, without, however, finding myself in agreement with the analysis of Milton's opinion that leads to it. Dr. McLachlan consistently avoids what should be the main point for a Christian critic of Milton: Milton did not believe in the existence of the soul as an entity separate from the body at the time when he was composing his longer masterpieces *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, *Samson Agonistes*, nor while he was putting together the treatise on Christian doctrine, whatever date this may in the end be decided to belong to (it seems to me, however, that the scholars who have a tendency to place the treatise on Christian doctrine too early in Milton's career set to themselves the problem of making the treatise harmonise with the earlier writings of Milton). Chapter XIII of the first book of the treatise is devoted to the demonstration that:

> In the Scripture idiom the soul is generally often put for the whole animate body. . . .
>
> There is abundant testimony to prove that the soul (whether we understand by this term the whole human composition or whether it is to be considered as synonymous with the spirit) is subject to death natural as well as violent.

Milton was a complete monist, but saw in matter, in spirit and in the divine substance itself varieties of the same substance.

Can this position be admitted by any critics that profess to be Christians whether they call themselves Unitarians or not? To argue, as Dr. McLachlan does, that Milton was a Unitarian and not to discuss this essential matter seems to me to avoid the main point. Milton was connected with a sect of his time called the Mortalists, who held the views that he expressed in the treatise on Christian doctrine and stated them as early as 1643 in a pamphlet entitled *Man's Mortality*. It is probable that Milton had something to do with the second edition of that pamphlet, published in 1655. As Dr. McLachlan confesses, Milton had probably not even heard of the Unitarian opinions. The word itself, it appears, was introduced from Holland to England (in obscure pamphlets) only two years before Milton died. Whether in a "comprehensive sense of the word as it was implied in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries John Milton may readily be called a Unitarian" is obviously a question which only Unitarians can pronounce upon, and I feel I am not entitled to any opinion on that. It may well be that many people now calling themselves Unitarians would welcome Milton's monistic view of the universe, but until recently that would not have been considered by the majority of religious people to be a Christian opinion at all.

On a wider issue, Dr. McLachlan leaves aside, probably on purpose, all the aspects of Milton that cannot very well be studied from any sectarian angle. Whatever his religious opinions, Milton was essentially a poet and a cultured man, a humanist and a philosopher (in a wide sense of that word), and not a sectarian who could be claimed by any particular Church or religious organisation. Milton is not only for England, but for the world. Here is a discussion on Milton which is only for a very small circle. It seems to me that it is more concerned with justifying the Unitarian position than with knowledge of Milton. Unitarians may not be a *sect* for the author of this book, but looked at objectively they are only a sect. On special points of doctrine, as the matter of the Invocation of Christ, Dr. McLachlan seems to me very good, and I have no doubt that this portion of his book will be found very interesting by all who are interested in Nonconformist theology.

Of Locke and Newton I do not know enough to pass judgment on the two essays which Dr. McLachlan devotes to them. I read those essays with great interest and can only hope that the author is better informed about Locke and Newton than he is about Milton. I cannot but remember, however, that Locke and Newton were the two gods of Voltaire's thinking. Was Voltaire also a Unitarian? Here, again, I cannot tell.

DENIS SAURAT

A GOOD AMBASSADOR

The American Speeches of Lord Lothian
Oxford University Press. 7s. 6d.

This volume does much to explain the great success won by Lord Lothian in his too-brief period as ambassador in Washington. They are the speeches of an attractive and straightforward personality, simple, not very profound, full of a real affection for his fellow-men, with that hatred of cruelty which, in the British aristocrat, so often leads to a genuine passion for liberty, at least upon the formal political plane.

It was a hazardous experiment when Lord Halifax selected Philip Lothian for the British Embassy at Washington. He had been high among the influences which made for the worst emphases in the appeasement period; and he had the added weakness that, though he had been long at the centre of affairs, he had shown no special gifts for separating the long secular trends from the immediate personal influences it is so easy for the "insider" to mistake as important. On the other hand, he had great merits. He knew America from within, which is unusual in any British diplomat of standing. He had none of the aloofness which makes our Embassies notorious over the world. He was always anxious to learn, eager for new experience, and open to new impressions. He had little of that professional reticence which, in some of his predecessors, was easily mistaken for arrogance. He knew—a rare thing among British politicians—how the American system worked; and he understood that nothing was more likely to be fatal to his success than that "certain condescension" which refuses to understand that the United States has outgrown every trace of the colonial period and is generous, above all, to those who recognise the fullness of its maturity.

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The volume contains a characteristic preface by Lord Halifax, and a pleasant memoir by his old friend Sir Edward Grigg. The memoir contains much interesting detail. It would have been improved if its unstated assumption did not seem to be that upon which John Buchan wrote his romantic novels—the presence in Lothian of some special texture not given to ordinary men. Philip Kerr had a good head, a brave heart, and a grand opportunity. It is not necessary to paint him as a great figure with a high place in history to recognise that he deserved well of his country.

HAROLD J. LASKI

NEW NOAH'S ARK

The New Noah's Ark. By ANDRÉ DEMAISON. Translated by ERIC SUTTON. *Dent.* 10s. 6d.

M. Demaison was a refugee from civilisation as far back as 1935 or 1936. At the age of twenty-three he "began a new life," with the African tropics for a setting and the purchase or capture of wild animals as his business. His first book, *Beasts Called Wild*, I haven't read, but *The New Noah's Ark*, his second, is entirely delightful. (Mr. Sutton's translation is unobtrusively excellent). It isn't easy, in these exact days, to write about animals with a touch of poetry; but M. Demaison does it. He possesses an accurate sympathy which would charm both scientists, hunters and humanitarians. M. Demaison's own attitude is somewhat complex: he likes nearly all animals from warthog to marmoset for their own sakes, and for the understanding that can grow up between men and animals; he recoils from the cruelties of nature more than from any cruelty involved in zoo or circus; he pets and pities, he enjoys the oddity as well as the beauty of many of the creatures that come into his hands. An odd collection they were, packed into an old schooner cruising the West Coast of Africa: hippo, hammer bird, Diana monkey, panther, python, chimp, baby elephant, striped deer, hyena, porcupine, tree rat, buffalo, calao, lion, ostrich. For the most part they went into his Ark one by one, and each had to be kept within the limits of its own crate. But the lion was as friendly as a dog, and the chimp Koffi almost embarrassingly friendly: he amazed the other animals and the crew by his sense of fun, by his cigarette smoking, his sips of absinthe and the warmth of his embrace. M. Demaison tends to exaggerate the human qualities of Koffi (whom he describes in one passage as the equal of "a boy of fourteen or even sixteen"!), but, in general, his observation is sharpened by affection. How well, for example, he describes an epidemic of yawning when it was too hot for sleep. He himself caught it from Koffi, and thereupon he went and yawned in front of a cage of monkeys to see if they were susceptible, too.

> At first the monkeys, who were crammed with bananas, eyed me with rising curiosity. Then they gradually tried to look away. In vain. They were invincibly attracted. They held their delicate black hands before their eyes. No use: the spell worked upon them, too, and they began to yawn. . . . The yawning spread to the neighbouring cages, one by one: the weeping monkeys clinging to the bars, looking like retired magistrates with their bushy whiskers; the dog-headed monkeys, in cages, with thin lips suddenly revealing ferocious canine teeth; green monkeys. . . . The crew, who had stopped work to observe the success of my experiment, were caught in their turn, and gave way, infecting all who had tried to hold out. The whole *Noah's Ark* was one vast yawn.

This passage, clear-cut with a hint of fantasy, is characteristic of M. Demaison; if you like it, you'll enjoy the book. He has a very good eye for scenery and people; and his impressions of lonely Frenchmen, a sprinkling of English, Ashanti warriors, and the ex-American negroes of Monrovia are exceptionally vivid. He notes, for example, that the blacks have no word for flower, though "their vocabulary on fruit is as copious as on children." His narrative ends surprisingly, and ironically, with shipwreck and a stampede of his animals back into the jungle: only the dog, the cat, a parrot and a couple of small snakes remained. He had, too, a bag of black sand to be tested for the presence of titanium, which would provide another adventure. That was in 1937. Let's hope he had time for the adventure, and for a book or two, before war pulled him back into civilisation.

G. W. STONIER

CHESTERTONS

The Chestertons. By MRS. CECIL CHESTERTON. *Chapman and Hall.* 12s. 6d.

I am glad to have the chance of recommending this book under the aegis of the Book Society. The author has talked and written very well all her literary life, which began when she sailed into Fleet Street at the age of sixteen as J. K. Prothero. There is a Dickensian gaiety of invention and caricature which cheers the heart of her readers, especially in the description of the golden (up to 1914) age and the silver age (up to 1936), when G. K. Chesterton died and the Hitler cloud began to bulge.

Forty years ago I was mentioning Froude's inaccuracy to Arthur Strong, who simply said "*Il a vu juste.*" That is equally true of Mrs. Chesterton, in spite of what authors call typist's errors, e.g., when she mentions the "matchless muscatel" she has enjoyed as my guest. Probably the typist or even the printer was puzzled by the word Moselle, just as a typist once infuriated Edward Thomas by substituting "volatile bitches" for "volatile birches." The author, however, while giving free rein to her imagination, achieves a very clear presentation of facts and specially of human character. Her little sketch of Elodie Belloc is a perfect specimen of what she does on a larger scale for the Chesterton family—particularly her husband, Cecil, whose personality well deserved such a record as this. She errs always on the side of charity—rather surprisingly so in the case of the Beaconsfield community—and is judicial even where there is a clash of temperament, as in the case of Frances Chesterton.

The tale of G. K. Chesterton's marriage and its repercussions on his health and character is excellently related. Marriage is much complicated by the fact that people are either urban, rustic, or suburban. G. K. Chesterton and the author are clearly urban, while Frances Chesterton was as clearly suburban. This difference is usually more difficult to bridge than that between urban and rustic, and G. K. Chesterton

obviously wilted in the atmosphere of Beaconsfield.

Cecil Chesterton's books might perhaps have been more fully described, especially his admirable *History of the U.S.A.* It is to be hoped that one day there will be a representative collection of his essays in the *New Witness* and elsewhere; there is, for instance, an extremely good essay on democracy in a volume edited by Mr. H. G. Wells called *The Great State*, which was published thirty years ago.

Unfortunately, many of his unpublished poems and essays were lost at Topmeadow, so that the author has been hopelessly handicapped in this respect. However, the old files of the *Eye Witness* and *New Witness* are quite a gold mine to any admirer of Cecil's writing, and, at any rate, the author had plenty of material for describing (as she does very well) the whole episode of the Marconi Enquiry and subsequent prosecution of Cecil for criminal libel. I was present at the Old Bailey trial and at many of the scenes the author describes, and no one could have done it better.

The ups and downs of the *Eye Witness* and *New Witness* make very good reading. As G. K. Chesterton said: "The paper stood for the privacy of the poor, who are allowed no privacy, and for the private property of those who have none." A particularly good instance is given on page 115 of the fight against the Mental Deficiency Bill and the ridiculous tests that were employed by so-called Eugenists. "After the Bill had become law," Mrs. Chesterton writes, "we had many and most pathetic appeals for help. One of our shareholders sent us an employee with his small boy. It seemed that the child, aged six, had been judged deficient by the school medical authorities and the parents had been informed that he would be taken to an institution within a few days. I shall not easily forget the father's agitation nor the small boy's distress. 'You see,' said the father, 'Jim doesn't speak much yet, but he understands all we say and is very bright at his lessons. He loves sums, but they tell us that he is so backward in his speech that he has to go away!' The author at once telephoned to Freke Palmer, who gained one of his admirable victories over the Board of Education. At the end of it the father wrote to the author: "If I'd been unbefriended they'd have got him, Miss, I know that, and the little chap would never have come back to us."

The *New Witness* was also responsible for excluding the clauses empowering the authorities to sterilise people whose mental defects would probably have been judged with much the same imbecile methods as the intelligence of the boy, some of which are mentioned in the book.

The book has a historical as well as a biographical value and should be widely read. It has all the quality of a good novel, and this quality can well excuse the spice of an occasional inaccuracy and exuberance. There is a dramatic ending where the author is blitzed out of her home and has to take refuge in a Cecil Chesterton house.

E. S. P. HAYNES

The Penguin New Writing, No. 7. Edited by JOHN LEHMANN. 6*d*.

This gala performance by the New Writing gang is as various as it is enjoyable. Rosamond Lehmann, in a perceptive and delicate study, describes the deficiencies as a novelist as well as the merits of Virginia Woolf, thus giving more weight to her appreciation. C. Day Lewis has a good poem, V. S. Pritchett does first-rate reporting of Home Guard life in the country, Stephen Spender shows a "bottom of good sense" in a consideration of Shelley, and Fanfarlo's latest instalment is a subtle mixture of nonsense and wisdom. (He is distinguished from almost all other modern humorists by his nice feeling for words.) The reprinted features include an excellent Zoschenko about overcrowding in Moscow, J. P. Sartre's brilliant Spanish war story, and Isherwood's *The Novaks*. The editor inexplicably declares that this shows Germans in a sympathetic light, whereas, to our eyes, it describes a whole family of neurotics, the father a drunkard, the mother a hysteric, and the son a prostitute. If this be characteristic of even half the German proletariat, the war should end soon. In any case, it is a dazzling description of *choses vues*.

The Single-Handed Mother. By LINDSEY W. BATTEN. *Allen and Unwin.* 5*s*.

A great deal of psychology is crystallised common sense. Many mothers, who combine commonsense with kindliness, would be successful in the upbringing of their children without reading a single book on the subject. But none would lose, and many would profit by the eminently sane advice contained in the chapters on "Management" and "Bad Habits" of this humanely and lucidly written little book. To put it briefly, the best way of "managing" children is to keep careful check on one's own impulse to "manage," which is often a mere habit of interference, while the best method of dealing with "bad habits" is to take as little notice as possible. Dr. Batten rightly dwells on the respect we owe to the child. One's only quarrel with him is that he tends to gloss over the fact that at least some of the persistent "bad habits" are more frequently than not due to emotional conflict, the causes of which nearly always lie in family relationships.

Week-end Competitions

No. 597

Set by Brian Hill

We offer the usual prizes for the best re-action by either Bertie Wooster, Jeeves or a member of the Drones' Club to the recent behaviour of their creator. In their own words, of course.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, July 21st.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize wi,, be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 594

Set by Hogo Stewart

Suppose a crazy week of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. The leader, say, is written by Y.Y.; Mr. Clive Bell, supplanting Urbanus, discourses on bulls and bears; Critic reviews a new volume of poems by Mr. T. S. Eliot. Competitors are invited to make whatever substitutions they like, and to spare no feelings. An extract of not more than 250 words from this extraordinary NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is requested.

Report by Hogo Stewart

The best opening sentence was provided by R. B. M., who parodied this competition: "Suppose a sane week of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION." Unfortunately, he could not keep it up; and his picture of a leader "*not* going all B.B.C." and of political comments "*not* taking its topics ready-made from Hansard" falls disappointingly wide of the mark. Others, however, have aimed better. Mr. Patrick Thornhill collected a number of small advertisements from recent issues and sent them in under the heading of "This England":

Prep. School for Boys. Modern ideas. Good food. No prep.

Gentleman (38, single) writing travel bk., would welcome assistance in improving literary style. Percentage basis.

Are there any intelligent Leftists, Lancaster district? Two lonely exiled Londoners languish there.

There were other transpositions equally convincing. Art Criticism written by Urbanus:

Large oil paintings were rather slack this week, and although the Chancellor's recent decision to reduce the tax on canvas by 1*s*. 6½*d*. per sq. yd. may ease the situation, I do not recommend them. Of the smaller ones, pre-Raphaelites remained weak, and the Post-Impressionists showed a tendency to wobble. . . . Romneys are suitable for export for the U.S.A., or has inflation already overwhelmed this sort of currency? . . .

N. P. MEADWAY

Scraps of Paper

In our sweet innocence we wrote here, a couple of months back: "It may prove a substantial economy to order clothes now."

Substantial economy! A month later it wasn't a question of cash but of coupons.

Up and down the country committees are working to save paper, but their efforts are dwarfed by the scheming and resourcefulness practised by all and sundry to economise those tiny scraps marked "margarine."

So when you decide to take the plunge and order a new suit, the advantages of getting a good one will be so obvious as to make redundant most of what Goss has been saying for years past in these columns.

And if you come to Goss, as we hope you will, please remember that first-class sewing tailors for civilian work are now all too rare. Goss does his utmost to deliver to the date required, and on no account will he lower his standards of workmanship, but do be patient, please, if a little delay does sometimes occur.

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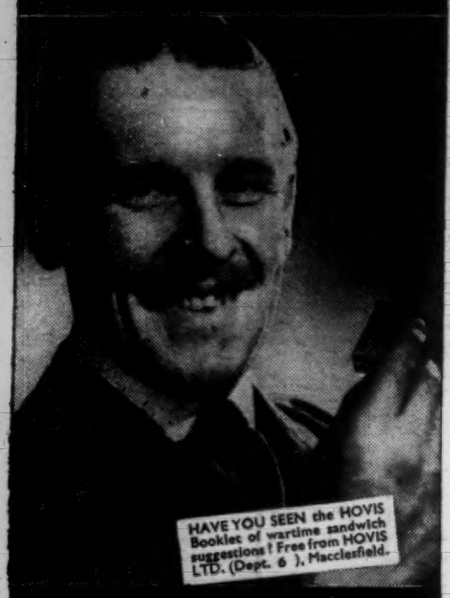

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TWO TABLETS GIVE MAGIC RELIEF

A front-page comment by Y.Y. :—

Far too little attention has been paid to the subject of dictators' moustaches. When all is said, a man can be intimate with few things more than his moustache. Hitler must be pleased anew every morning by what he sees in his shaving-mirror, or he would promptly change it. Mussolini evidently prefers barefacedness. Stalin has some reason for cultivating that stupendous handle-bar. Let us go deeper into the matter. . . .

D. W. BARKER

Professor Laski reviewing a concert :

Toscanini is a magister with the baton, and his conducting of Beethoven's 101st symphony was more than ever senatorial. This seminal music —as Mr. Justice Holmes once described it— deserves no less, and no more. M. BEETON

G. W. Stonier writing About Motoring :—

So it is to be bicycling now, instead of motoring. No more juice. No more lifts for plump, friendly girls. I must catalogue my resolutions.

Not to talk of the Bentley I have had to give up. (And, if I do, not to look my friends straight in the eyes : this reveals the liar.)

Not to leave my bicycle to rust unoiled. "Tout est sensible," as Nerval says, "A la matière même un verbe est attaché." Who would face the squeak of a Raleigh?

Not to run over cats. (If a tyke snaps at my trouser-clip, he must take his chance.)

Not to fall off.

All negatives, I agree, but the Kodak man round the corner says that one negative will beget a thousand positives.

A bicycle : two rolling silver-grey eyes : a *face-à-main* with the handle folded ; twin sundials with a single gnomon on which I am equivocally perched ; the marks on the bar-counter left by a brace of milds-and-bitters.

When Bouvard and Pécuchet tried to ride their tandem, which of them sat in front? R. W.

Movie stars as seen by the Parliamentary Correspondent :

Myrna Loy is superb. Her spirited portrayal stamps her with more than a physical resemblance to Ellen Wilkinson ; whilst her twinkling smile is really Churchill at his most malicious. With her hands she is as eloquent as the member for West Fife. Her husband—dutiful but dumb—is played with all the passivity of a Conservative back-bencher of the Chamberlain era.

H. C. WITHERS

A Critic paragraph on Mr. T. S. Eliot's new poem :

I tried it on Mr. Fluke the gardener, and then on a roomful of children. . . . It isn't generally known that Tom Eliot has a way of his own with children ; he treats them as he might you or me or Mr. Churchill, and there are few more delightful sights in the world than Tom reciting his *Waste Land* to a young audience from the shrubbery in the village school. . . . When I saw him last, he was looking into the window of a joke-shop in the Strand, meditating, I gather, on the implications of a soya bean. . . . S. W.

Mr. Clive Bell passing judgment on the Week in Westminster :

Little lief though I be to gainsay a lady whose provocative *petit museau* invites the scissors of a Reboux if not the brush of a Renoir, I must place a word about the Member who on Tuesday once again importuned the House with a demand for even sillier interferences with our rights to drink. It is not to be expected that a compatriot of Mesdames Eddy and Wilcox should understand the Englishman's modest need of a pint of bitter, but her Ladyship might have the civility to consider her constituents. It is still not too late for her to make a startling discovery—to wit that our honest Tars, on whose brave offices Members of Parliament, no less than mere artists, depend for the coffee of their breakfasts and the caviare of their luncheons, care not a fig for what are illiterately called "minerals." I presume to offer this news to her Ladyship, because I would rather allow for ignorance than pronounce upon impertinence. My well-known admiration for her sex. . . . BOLERO

Mr. Laing (congratulations on 100th birthday, by the way) wins a prize with an entry mingling Sagittarius and The Coming Week. His entry shares the Prizes, divided equally, with Bolero's expertly titivated "Mortimer in the City," and T. M. Parry's happy amalgamation of Bond Street and Sissinghurst.

PRIZES

I

THE COMING WEEK, or
TAKING A RISE OUT OF SAGITTARIUS

On Saturday, C. E. M. Joad
will speak on "A New Moral Code"
at the New Conway Hall,
eight o'clock, free to all,
and tickets of entry be blowed.

On the following day, Dr. Stopes
gives a talk on "The Woman Who Mopes":
I would place it and time it,
but, hell, I can't rhyme it :
join up with The Audience That Gropes!

The good Friends of Russia will meet
on Monday, in Great Russell-street,
where a Major, too smarmy,
will boost the Red Army :
(collection, plus sixpence a seat).

On Tuesday the N.C.C.L.,
T.U.C., L.N.U., and P.L.
meet in various places
to rough out a basis
for giving the Communists hell.

There's a succulent Fabian lunch
among Wednesday's "coming week" bunch :
here Wells squeaks (getting shirty)
at just on twelve-thirty
while Fabians mutter and munch.

Two Lords, a Field Marshal, a wit,
take Thursday for their little bit :
the talk will be Tory—
of Empire and glory,
at a club in Pall Mall—(you may spit).

On Friday, the last of them all,
there's a Symphony Orch. at Queen's Hall ;
and a Conference (crime-y)
at Friends' House—Oh, blimey,
this list is beginning to pall.

ALLAN M. LAING

II

MORTIMER IN THE CITY

The rise in Small Tools Associated Common Stock must be vehemently recommended to *dilettanti*. I have been studying its graph with prodigious delight. So subtly whip-like a curve has not been paragoned since the fall of Péterades Unies Pref. in 1923, though there are passages that, I confess, remind me of the Lamont operations consecutive upon the first flush of the Grand Slump. But can Small Tools persist, every sophisticated speculator must be asking himself, or is this a merely Icarian *bravura* doomed infelicitously to a lingering *noyade* in the Sargasso Sea where so many stripling companies still attend the posh avatars they so logically promised? I am too little a Cassandra to say "Yes," too unconfident a Nostrodamus to plump for a denial. But I must repeat—and I make bold to believe that not even the President of the Stock Exchange will be so dowdy as to differ—that Small Tools have revealed a *flamme intérieure* that stands handsomely up to the stunning pyrotechnics of such classics as United Steel in the '80s and Bethlehem Ordinary in to those iridescent, cute, already so nostalgic, 'twenties. BOLERO

III

V. SACKVILLE-WEST ON SURREALISM

During the heat wave last week, my Alsatian Prunella and I were glad, while going down Bond Street, to escape from the heat into the cool gloom of Messrs. Sinew's. The silver-haired director escorted me up to the galleries, while Prunella lay under the staircase—a dog will invariably find the coolest place for itself.

Seen at a distance *en masse*, surrealist paintings are not unpleasing. Eccentricities of colour and design are lost, giving place to cheerful iridescent patterns ; just as the herbaceous border forms a patchwork of many colours when I see it from my study window. Here, splashes of vermilion remind me of the giant Californian poppies (*Papaver giganticum Californiensis*), there, streaks of deep aquamarine resemble a clump of that hardy delphinium, *D. Churchillii*.

As we leave, our kind host offers us drinks : still lemonade for myself, soda-water for Prunella —my dogs will go all day, in the hottest weather, on a little soda-water ; it is said also to act as an aperient. Then, rested and refreshed, we set out for Vincent Square, to see the Rhododendron Society's show. T. M. PARRY

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

THE GILT-EDGED "BOOM"—A "VICTORY" RISE IN EQUITIES—RUSSIAN SUPPLY NEEDS

THE rise in the gilt-edged market has been resumed and, of course, where there is a rise there is a rumour. On this occasion the rumour is the stale one that the Government will shortly be making another issue of War Bonds at a lower coupon rate. One firm of brokers appears to see no limit to the fall in interest rates, and believes that the present era of cheap money will be maintained for the rest of the war and for some years afterwards. On this assumption these brokers suggest that holders of 3 per cent. Local Loans, which are callable at 100, should sell and reinvest in 2½ per cent. Consols. Personally, I would not be prepared at the moment to accept the lower income yield (Consols at 82 7/8 yield £3 0s. 9d. per cent. and Locals at 95 1/8 £3 2s. 9d. per cent.). If the Government had a firm wages policy and there was some guarantee that not only would the cost of living be pegged, but that no further increases in wages would be negotiated, one might begin to discount a further fall in interest rates. But the Government's wages policy is still infirm. At the exploratory meeting last week of employers and workers at the Ministry of Labour, the latter made it clear that any proposals for a national wage stabilisation policy would have to be accompanied with an extension of rationing over the whole range of essential commodities, with an adjustment of wages for the lower paid workers and with a more drastic limitation of profits and dividends. Organised labour, and I believe Mr. Bevin himself, are not convinced that the "equality of sacrifice" has been achieved in practice as between employers and employees. It is significant that the wages question has been excluded from the terms of reference of the new joint committee of employers and workers set up to advise the Production Executive. While the danger remains of an unco-ordinated and inflationary wages policy I would expect to see a definite limit to the fall in interest rates.

* * *

The despatch of American troops to Iceland, the failure of the Nazi armies to smash the Russians in three weeks, the R.A.F. "invasion" of Occupied France and Germany, and the ending of the Syrian campaign have all combined to win a signal victory for the "bulls" of ordinary shares. Not only have our industrial and oil shares risen sharply, but Wall Street has staged a comeback, in spite of the fact that Major Angas has not, as far as I know, left the "bear" for the "bull" tack. (But to be 24 hours distant from this prophet is to be hopelessly out of date.) I am not making any guesses about military affairs, about which I know nothing, but as an investment practitioner I would say that it only needs another soothsayer in the Sunday press to predict Hitler's death next year, another heartening move by Roosevelt (like the occupation of Dakar or Southern Ireland ports), and a bloody deadlock on the Russian battlefields to start the "victory" or "peace" rise in ordinary shares on the Stock Exchanges of London and New York. Therefore, my advice to investors is to sit tight, and maintain their equity positions. If they "switch," let them not switch from ordinary share to fixed interest, but from equity to equity.

* * *

Mr. Laurence Cadbury has important work to do in Moscow in co-ordinating British and Soviet supplies of raw materials. If there was a leakage of raw materials to Germany through Vladivostok (which I am doubtful), it is good to know that it has been stopped. But we must see that another leak is not started through Japan. Recently, it has been the policy of Thailand to starve the Straits Settlement of tin ore and to make shipments of tin direct to Japan. We must see that Thailand ore comes again to the Straits Settlement to enable tin to be shipped to Russia via Vladivostok. But oil is more important for the immediate purposes of Russia than any other raw material. The main Russian oilfields are geographically remote. Ninety per cent. of Soviet oil production comes from the Caspian area—in other words, Baku, Grozny and the new fields between the Volga and the Urals. Transport is, therefore, the crux of the oil situation. If it were impossible for the Russian army to get supplies from the Baku fields via the southern route, which is centred in the refinery at Odessa, America will have to make immediate shipments of oil through Vladivostok. To grab oil must be the secondary object of the German campaign. Russia has an oil production of 30,000,000 tons a year. At home and from Rumania the Nazis can only rely on obtaining between 7,000,000 and 8,000,000 tons of oil. It is possible that they may have grabbed some oil in Eastern Poland, if the Russians did not destroy the oil refineries before leaving, but the East Polish fields produced only half a million tons of crude oil a year before the war, and if the Russian bombing of Ploesti—the refining centre in Rumania—has been effective, the Germans may have lost by that more than they gained in East Poland. The Nazi consumption of oil in the Russian campaign must be tremendous. And Russia will need American oil for her industries to offset her military consumption.

PERSONAL

"POLLY" AT UNITY THEATRE. For this production by the Workers' Music Association, singers are required. An audition will be held to-morrow, 13th, at 11 a.m., and on Monday at 6.30 p.m. at Unity Theatre, 1 Goldington Street, N.W.1. Help is welcomed. The production will be under the direction of Geoffrey Dunn assisted by a Committee including Geoffrey Corbett, Ben Frankel and Arnold Goldsbrough.

REMEMBER to listen to Edmund Watts on the Home Service Programme next Sunday, July 13th, at 8.40 p.m.

HOLIDAY job for two or three young people at Children's Farm, Romansleigh, N. Devon: August, September. Riding, cycling, etc. Au pair.

THE SUNDAY PRACTICE ORCHESTRA meets Sunday mornings, 10.30–12.30 at Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, N.W.1. Vacancies for good players in most sections. Hon. Sec., 24 Fairacres, Roehampton Lane, S.W.15.

55 OAKLEY ST., Chelsea. Bed-sitting rooms always available in this large modern boarding house. Flaxman 5645.

SEND your children's clothes to Mabel Lethbridge, 55 Oakley Street, Chelsea, for bombed out Chelsea children. Gifts of tea welcomed also.

NOTE Mr. Laing's advice on page 9, col. 2, in issue of July 5th.

MUSIC AND BOOKS ON MUSIC PURCHASED, particularly Collected Works of Classics and good items of 18th Century and earlier. Orchestral scores, old MSS. Otto Haas, 49a Belsize Park Gardens, London, N.W.3. 'Phone: Pri. 1488.

NEW FOREST. Safe area. Comfortably furnished guest-bungalow on beautiful property. Single room 22 x 16, kitchenette, bathroom. W.C. Offered to couple or friends interested in gardening and care of aviary birds. Rent free and small salary for part-time work. Box 9538.

MOTHER (2 children), progressive educationist, requires accommodation in S. or S.W. district where there is need for a Nursery School and Kindergarten. Box 9565.

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